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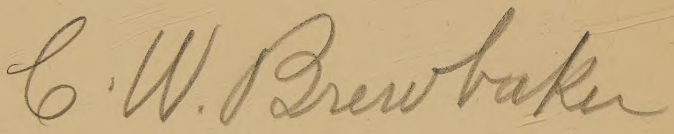

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A Study of Christ's Better Way in the Use of Scripture

BY

BENJAMIN W. BACON

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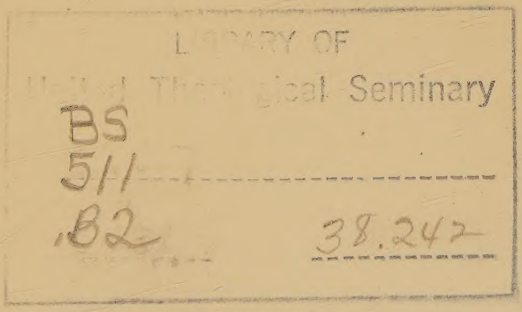
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CHAPTER I

PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF DIVINE REVELATION

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CHAPTER I

PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF DIVINE REVELATION

The Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture differs widely from the pagan, and scarcely less widely from that of contemporary Judaism from which it sprang. The pagan expresses his consciousness of the more than individual authority attaching to a code of laws, such as that of Hammurabi, or Solon, or Lycurgus, or that of the Twelve Tables, by declaring them a divine revelation. Doubtless the codifier enhances their appeal by making the most of this representation. But we do injustice to him and to his readers alike if we think the representation is a mere imposition. On the contrary, the ancient framer of a code of law is sincerely conscious that the product of his pen is not his own. Were it indeed of his own manufacture, the code would have by common consent but little value, whether for the compiler or for others. To have any cogency at all, it must embody the *mores,* the consuetudinary law, the civil and religious usages of the group. It becomes, thus, an expression of its moral and

religious consciousness, and, as such, is regarded as in some sense "divine." The ancient codes have survived because they were crowned with the halo of this divine authority. Without it they would have perished, because antiquity has no other means of expressing authority of this type save to call it divine. The nation feels itself to be indeed "taught of God."

We may state it, then, as a general rule in the history of culture that primitive consuetudinary law, when it advances to the stage of codification, is also canonized. Whether by formal act, or by gradual acceptation, it becomes endowed with superhuman attributes and authority, because it is felt to embody general rights and obligations. The Old Testament preserves no less than four accounts of the formal process of canonization after codification of the successive strata of "the law of Moses." Exodus 24:4–8 records the canonization by an act of formal covenant between the people and God (represented through priest and altar, sacrifice and sprinkling of blood) of the code known to critics as the Elohistic Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20–23). A similar scene is enacted with increased elaboration and solemnity to depict the promulgation of the Deuteronomic Code (Dt. 27:1–26), whose actual adoption, through another form of popular pledge to God, is described by a nearly contemporary historian in II Kings 23:1–3. Finally, Ezra's reconstructed and enlarged Book of the Law of Moses is validated and adopted by similar cere-

monies covering an entire week of observances described in Nehemiah 8:1–6.

Neither pagan nor Jew is limited to law in his conception of the sphere of divine revelation and inspiration. Indeed, to the primitive mind there is something awe-inspiring in literature itself, which through the medium of written symbols enshrines the soul of the past. Primitive man values especially the mystic utterances of soothsayer and seer, prophet, priest, or shaman, who in terms of magic or religion interprets to him the reactions of the mysterious universe in which he finds himself. Priest or prophet as well as lawgiver, if he speak for himself alone, is without authority. And he, too, is far from insincere in clothing his oracular utterances with the halo of divinity. On the contrary, he invariably falls back upon a vast body of inherited mythology, folklore and tradition, in which his own belief is no less intense (if perhaps somewhat more reflective and discriminating) than the superstition of the masses. That is a very crude type of psychology which accounts for the belief in the inspiration of oracle and seer by a theory of purposed imposture on the part of priests bent on promoting their own interests and authority. Self-seeking priestcraft and false prophecy are not unknown; priests and prophets can be found at every stage of human culture, who connive at deception or willingly add impetus to popular credulity, knowing its readiness to be turned to any unworthy purpose. But even in the advance of superstition the

leaders are rarely insincere. They are far more apt to be themselves more deceived than deceiving. In its lowest forms, this expression of mass-psychology is stigmatized as "false" prophecy. The greatest crimes with which the name of religion has been stained have been committed under the domination of its spirit of fanaticism and credulity. But in its higher manifestations prophecy has lifted the spirit of a people to its noblest ideals and attainments. The "prophet" truly worthy of the name uses his utmost power to discriminate, from an inherited mass of mingled truth and superstition, abiding elements of moral and religious value.

By a divine overruling, or (if we choose to borrow the terminology of the biologists) a survival of that best fitted to the social and ethical ideal, it is the highest which in the end survives. Prophecy, like law, when it has reached the stage of embodiment in literary form is also canonized. The act or process expresses popular appreciation of that more than human factor which enters into prophecy, that burning inspiration of the true champion of right which teaches him that he is not speaking for himself, but is the mouthpiece of an eternal divine law of righteousness shaping the destinies of men and nations. The Jewish people's sense of this finds expression in placing the masterpieces of written prophecy side by side with the codes of law to form a second canon. For in Israel the prophets came to be the statesmen of Jehovah. Their writings, including both narrative and exhortation, understood

to give interpretation and practical application to the divine will laid down in the Law. For in Jewish application "prophecy" includes the narrative books. The prophet thus becomes the successor of Moses. In each successive generation a prophet is "raised up" for the leadership and direction of the people in the path marked out for it by its invisible King (Dt. 18:15–19).

In due time poetry, legend, mythology, were reduced to written form; and these, too, so far as popular use found in them expression of its religious life, were canonized in Israel. That is, such elements of the mingled later literature as were found helpful in practical experience to the religious life of the people by giving expression and impetus to their moral and religious ideal, were admitted (not without long dispute) to the list of books officially approved for public reading in the synagogue. In the Judaism of New Testament times, whence Christianity derives its conception of canonicity, this third group receives the general, all-inclusive title of "Writings" (*Hagiographa,* as the Greek translators render the term), a group whose outer limit remained in dispute well into the second century after Christ. Supporters of the claims to admission for this or that book maintained that it "defiled the hands," in other words, should be written on parchment, not on papyrus. For parchment, being the skin of a dead body, made him who touched it ritually "unclean." The necessity for washing the hands after touching the book may

have been a protection against careless handling, but the real origin of the strange expression is doubtless the fact that parchment, being much more expensive as well as more durable than papyrus, was in practice reserved for writings of greater value and importance. Simple use and wont had probably most to say in securing admission of particular writings to this third group of the Jewish canon. Congregations demanded what in practice they had become accustomed to hearing, and (on whatever interpretation) had found religiously helpful. In the debates of the rabbis reasons are found in the religious lessons which current interpretation discovered. It was indeed this interpretation (critical or otherwise), not their original and authentic meaning, which gave them contemporary effect, and thus constituted their real contribution to the religious life of the time.

In all this long process of canonization we must distinguish between the genuine, unsophisticated instinct of the people as a whole, conscious of the moral uplift it receives, and particular theories advanced, whether among the credulous masses, or their scarcely less credulous but more sophisticated religious leaders, to give account of, and justify, this consciousness. The consciousness is of God. Through it the eternal Word bears perennial witness to its own authorship. As for the writers and compilers of this multiform literature covering several languages and almost a millennium of time, neither are they so egotistic, nor the people so ir-

religious, as to take the writings as no more than the individual output of so and so many individual human brains. Varied as the collection is, it possesses both a national and a religious unity. As an ancient writer expresses it, one dominant Spirit (*principalis spiritus*) pervades the whole. It is a canon, a Bible, a people's expression of its historic spiritual life through selections from its national literature. Even were we then to deny to individual Scripture writers any conscious coöperation of the eternal Spirit of Truth, we should still be compelled to admit an element beyond themselves in this unsought unity. The canonization of a sacred literature makes it in a real sense "God's book."

Ancient religious thought expresses its sense of the superhuman factor in such embodiments of national religious life by some form of consecration or taboo. Epic or Veda, mystic Way or Book of the Dead, oracle of priestly shrine or surah of the Koran, the utterance is declared "inspired," because both he who speaks and they who hear subordinate (though in different degree) elements admittedly human, transient, individual, and fallible to that which by origin and destiny alike may well claim immortality. Preserved in written form, these utterances of seer, poet, prophet, or lawgiver justify their title to reverence as divinely "revealed" and "inspired" just in so far as we limit our view to that which gives them unity. We count them truly such because of their expression of a religious and moral consciousness at first national, ultimately

universal; and this growing consciousness can reasonably be regarded by religious-minded men as due to the guidance and discipline of a higher Power, a Spirit that works invisibly through the ages, a "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." As Loescher wisely said of the slow determination of the canon:

> Not at a single stroke and by human determination was it brought forth, as men declare, but little by little, by agency of God, the director of minds and of ages.[1]

We have seen that there are elements of identity in all doctrines of revelation and inspiration; because most religions, once culture has reached the literary stage, tend to produce a canon of sacred Scripture. The communal mind unloads its store of accumulated tradition, law, legend, belief, and poetry upon the written page. Later generations, falling heir to the treasure, naturally invest it with attributes expressive of a divine authority. For records such as these are felt to be written embodiments of the communal soul-life and are used to promote it. In proportion as the institutions of the group come to be built upon these writings men vie with one another in ascribing to them superhuman attributes; and ascriptions of this type will always tend to take a hyperbolic form.

[1] Non uno, quod dicunt, actu ab hominibus, sed paulatim a Deo, animorum temporumque rectore, productus. Quoted by Driver, *Introduction to Old Testament,* ed. v., p. xxxvi, from Strack.

In the process of canonization law is apt to take a leading part, because the authority of law is a matter of immediate practical necessity. Post-exilic Judaism was built upon it. When the book was endangered martyrs gave their lives to save it. But in such codes as the Mosaic there is at first no differentiation of civil from criminal law, nor even of religious ceremonial from secular jurisprudence. Still less do we find discrimination between the ideal morality of inward disposition and prescription for external conduct such as the administration of public justice requires. This is true, of course, not only of the Mosaic, but also of other ancient codes. Still there is a difference. In the modern court room lies the Bible, soiled by unreverent kisses of witnesses, true and false. This, not the statute-books at the lawyers' desks, represents invisible divine authority. Men scarcely realize the meaning of the act. It is almost forgotten in these days when legislation is cheap, and respect for the product of our wholesale lawmakers corresponds to its cheapness, that the laws were once thought of as divine, and those who made and administered them were called by poetic symbolism "gods" and "sons of the Most High" (Ps. 82:6).

Matters were somewhat otherwise in the old-time Jewish court room, the synagogue. Here, too, was the law-book of Moses, the Torah, wrapped in its covering embroidered with the wedding chaplets of Israel's marriage covenant with Jehovah at Sinai. With it in the shrine are "the Prophets," narrative

and hortatory, understood to be interpretative of the Torah to successive generations. As a later group, associated ultimately with "the law and the prophets," are the "Writings" of poetry and philosophy, and the hymns of temple worship. All were counted divinely "inspired," but not independently. Prophets and writings derived their authority from the Law. They had no other function than to shed further light upon the problem how Israel should fulfill Jehovah's will. "Revelation" and "inspiration" belonged to the second group of the canon, but by a reflected light, and the authority of the third group was still more indirect.

But as a whole the book represented Jehovah. It embodied his righteous will. The conception is significant of the nature of Judaism as a religion of law. Since Ezra, the great scribe, laid its foundations when he returned from Babylon "with the book of the Law of his God in his hand," the "lawyer," that is, the "scribe," has sat in Moses' seat. Since the time that there has been such a thing as a synagogue the scribe has ruled its destinies; and for it the attributes of revelation and inspiration have attached primarily to the code of law. This constitutes the distinctive feature of "Judaism," the religion of Israel since Ezra's reconstruction. Poets, sages, prophets, obtained in time [1] that place along-

[1] The Prologue of Ecclesiasticus (ca. 170 B.C.) shows a canon consisting of "the Law, the Prophets and the other books." But the third group, the *Kethubim* ("writings"), was of undetermined extent. It remained unsettled until about 125 A.D.

side the Torah which belonged to them by inherent right, and which the religious consciousness of worshipers insistently demanded. The older literature remained to rekindle prophetic fires. But even in its highest developments the Jewish doctrine of sacred Scripture remains fundamentally what it has been from Ezra's time, a doctrine of divine Law; a book of precepts to be obeyed under sanction of reward and penalty. In its lower forms we do not need to be told how largely this Jewish doctrine of sacred Scripture partook of the superstitious and magical ideas of pagan bibliolatry. In its higher expressions it deserves at least to be understood.

Extravagant utterances of rabbinic writers, such as the statement that the Almighty himself spends the morning hours of each day in the study of his own Torah,[1] should not be interpreted as sober prose. They employ the characteristic method of paradox and hyperbole to express an appreciation which does not differ in essence from the praises of Psalm 19, Psalm 119, and other late writers for the written word. The sages of the Wisdom literature have similar praises for something behind the letter, the divine "spirit of Wisdom." This stands over against the externalized revelation of the rabbis as Luther's doctrine of the Scriptures, which "contain

[1] The paradoxical saying may be compared with the Kantian principle of absolute morality, or the contemporary Greek conception of "fate" to which Zeus himself must bow. The rabbi looks upon the Torah as the reflection of absolute right. To say that Jehovah himself studies it is only a poetic way of saying God himself is limited to that which is right (Gen. 18:25).

the word of God," stands over against that of the post-Reformation dogmatists, who decreed that they "are" the word of God. Originally Wisdom (*hoqmah*) was conceived as an exhalation from the Creator himself impregnating the human understanding. Ultimately it was identified with the written Torah. But this was poetic symbolism.[1]

Doubtless there were in the days of Jesus and Paul, as now, both in Synagogue and primitive Church, differences of view. There may well have been those whose conception of revelation and inspiration was less mechanical and literal than the expressions of Josephus, and even of Philo, would imply. We must make room for both. There are no Biblical critics so unsparing as the Bible writers themselves. One must go to a Jeremiah to see what a living prophet can say of the codified Torah of priest and prophet to which men appealed in his time (Jer. 7:21–28; 31:31–34). One must go to the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament to hear similar words concerning the prescription of "them of old time," the divine authority appealed to by scribe and Pharisee.

When one attempts to characterize the Jewish doctrine of revelation and inspiration over against the Christian it is important to include the broader as well as the narrower interpreters on both sides. The Talmud classifies them as belonging to the

[1] Cf. Ecclus. 24:3 ff. with verses 23 ff. appended to the same poem, and Bar. 3:9–37 with the similar supplement appended in 4:1 ff.

school of Shammai (strict constructionists) or of Hillel (liberals). There were scribes in Jesus' time who were, to his mind, "not far from the kingdom of God," because they responded to his summary of the whole Law in the twofold commandment of absolute devotion to God and recognition of men as sons of the same Father. The public teaching of Jesus ends with the saying of a scribe of this type: "Master, thou hast well said. To love God with all the heart, all the understanding, all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is much more than all whole burnt offering and sacrifice."

This scribe is not the only one. A century later we find resistance on the part of rabbis in the schools of Jamnia to attempts to override the sober judgment of reason and conscience expressed in the vote of the assembly by appeal to vision (contemporary), divine revelation, and miracle. The boldness of these protests astounds the Christian scholar unless he be aware that Jewish rabbis also could insist, like Paul, on testing the spirits, because "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," or, as Bishop Butler put it in his famous *Analogy*: "Reason [in which he would include the moral judgment] is the only faculty we have whereby to judge of anything, were it of revelation itself."

While the sober conservatism of the Church in the second century was bringing under control the unbridled millenarian fanaticism of Montanus, the Synagogue was facing a like danger. Jewish rabbis were forced to discredit appeals to miracle and "voices

from heaven," precisely as Christian Church fathers discredited the flood of apocalyses and thaumaturgy, until but a single writing of this type remained in the Christian canon. Even the so-called "Apocalypse of John" (self-styled "Prophecy") barely retained its hold, and in only a portion of the Church. However well worthy of the place, this writing, too, was not retained for its own sake so much as because it was ascribed to "a great apostle." When we seek to define the Jewish doctrine of revelation and inspiration in the time of Jesus and Paul, utterances of the sober-minded rabbis of the early second century must be taken into the account also. We cannot fairly limit ourselves to the extravagances of their opponents, such as R. Eliezer, and the half-pagan laudations of Josephus and Philo.[1]

[1] If any man lack a sense of humor let him ask of God. He may receive it without upbraiding for past offenses. But let him not approach the Talmud until he is sure that his prayer has been answered.

In no less than three different passages the Talmud illustrates the disrepute into which appeal to *bath qol* (= voice from heaven, that is, contemporary supernatural revelation) had fallen, by quoting a saying of R. Samuel invoked by R. Judah: "Every day there goes forth a bath qol saying, So and so's daughter is intended for so and so." One might render this into modern speech by saying, "Every time a young couple become engaged they want you to believe the match was made in heaven."

Much more definite still is the story and connected saying, *"We do not care for bath qol,"* which is appealed to again and again in both Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud, to establish the principle that matters of law and conscience (*halakha*) must be settled by majority vote, not by appeal to the supernatural. R. Eliezer, greatest of the college of sages at Jamnia, early in the second century, had been overruled by his colleagues on a question relating to the purification of ovens. He refused to

There should be no need to repeat what has been so admirably said by the late Professor Sanday in his Bampton Lectures for 1893 entitled *Inspiration,* characterizing the "estimate of the Old Testament

yield the point and began an appeal to miracle. "Let this carob-tree prove," said he, "that the *halakha* prevails as I state." The carob-tree was thereupon miraculously thrown off to a distance of one hundred (or, as others say, four hundred) ells. "But they said, 'The carob-tree proves nothing.' Again he said, 'Then let the spring of water prove that this *halakha* prevails.' The water began to run uphill. But again the sages said, 'This proves nothing.' Again he said, 'Then let the walls of the college prove that I am right'; whereupon the walls of the college were so shaken that they were about to fall. But R. Joshua rebuked them, saying, 'If the sages of this college are discussing a *halakha* what business have *you* to interfere?' So they stood still." Thus Eliezer's appeal to miracle was ruled out of court. But he was still undaunted. In last resort he cried, "Let it be announced by the heavens that the *halakha* prevails according to my statement." Upon this a bath qol was heard, saying, "Why do you quarrel with R. Eliezer, who is always right in his decisions?" But the indomitable R. Joshua, worthy namesake of him whose faith overthrew the walls of a greater city than Jamnia, not overawed even by one who could evoke echoes from heaven in support of his views and thus be "always right in his decisions," arose and quoted Dt. 30:12 ff.: "The Torah is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it to us, but very nigh thee, in thy heart and in thy mouth."

There may be literalists so deficient in sense of humor as not to see the point of this quite fictitious but very pointed anecdote. It is for the sake of such that the Talmud appends a comment which is bolder than the anecdote itself in its use of expository fiction. "How is this to be understood? R. Jeremiah said, 'It means, The Torah was already given to us on Mount Sinai, *and we do not care for a voice from heaven,* as it reads (Ex. 23:2 in the Targum), "After the majority shalt thou fulfil judgment."'" Then it goes on, telling a tale to reënforce a tale, "R. Nathan met Elijah the prophet (who was believed to stand in the presence of God), and asked him, 'What did the Holy One, blessed be He, when R. Joshua made this decision?'

in the first century of the Christian era" (Lecture II, pp. 70–90). In method and outline it would be hard to improve upon our great English scholar.

We have three principal sources for determining what was the Jewish doctrine of inspired Scripture, and they do not materially differ in their general conception; for on the whole it remains true in substance as Loisy has said (*Canon de l'A. T.*, p. 97):

> The Savior and the Apostles quoted from a body of divine Scriptures, and it does not appear that in their teaching they desired to make any innovation so far as the extent or authority of this collection are concerned. Neither the apostolic writings nor the tradition of the Christian Church afford any trace of an explicit decision laid down by Jesus Christ or the Apostles in regard to the canon of the Old Testament, much less a decision correcting the received opinions of the Jewish world.

Taking account of the saving clause "so far as the extent or authority . . . are concerned" this general statement is true, in spite of certain implicit larger principles in the mode of approach to Scripture which characterize the utterances of Jesus and Paul, and even to some extent the New Testament writers. These principles, however, as Sanday him-

Elijah rejoined, 'He laughed and said: My children have overruled me. My children have overruled me.'"

It is perhaps needless to add that in spite of the affinity of thought the Talmudic vindicators of the right of reason and conscience to overrule revelation itself had not read Butler's *Analogy*.

self considers, enable ministers of the New Covenant to "transcend current Rabbinical methods in a manner to penetrate more deeply to the heart of the Old Testament teaching." We must later attempt to define these principles more closely.

In order of date the three sources for determining current Jewish belief are: (1) Philo, whose works reach down to about 40 A.D.; (2) the New Testament, beginning with I Thessalonians written about 50 A.D., a group of writings covering at least the rest of the century; and (3) the *Antiquities* and *Contra Apionem* of Josephus, written about 93–94 A.D. Sanday's survey of the "properties ascribed to the Old Testament" in these writings is as complete and impartial as could be desired, and requires little, if any, supplementation from Talmudic sources. For the Talmud also, although not reduced to systematic written form till some two centuries later, gives wholly reliable reports, so far as this particular doctrine is concerned, of the teachings of rabbis contemporary with Jesus and Paul. Only, when we talk of "the received opinions of the Jewish world" as endorsed by Jesus and the Apostles, let us remember that the phrase (while true in substance) is very general, and that the "received opinions" were not then, any more than now, all of one kind.

Philo's conception of inspiration is clearly based on the utterances of the "prophets who spake in the name of the Lord." To some extent the old mantic idea survives of the seer "falling down and having his eyes opened" (Num. 24:4). Vision and

trance have always been the convenient avenues of communication from the unseen, and at least the form of these is retained even in the written prophecies of the literary period. We cannot be quite sure, when we read the accounts of their divine call given by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, precisely how much of this apparatus of vision and mystical audition is literary convention, as in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* and how much is actual trance. In Daniel the visions are certainly literary conventions, and this applies still more to Enoch and the later apocalypses; for they obviously imitate one another in reproducing these descriptions. All that we can say with certainty is that men like Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were profoundly conscious that they were commissioned by Jehovah with a message for his people. The more directly this message was concerned with justice, mercy, and loyalty, the greater the prophet's consciousness of divine authority. For men like Amos, Micah, Isaiah, were at least as conscious as we that the Power not ourselves that moves through history is one that "makes for righteousness." Justice and judgment were to them the habitation of Jehovah's throne.

Spiritual vision and audition were in the time of the literary prophets the immemorial methods through which first the seer, afterward the prophet (I Sam. 9:9), had conveyed such messages from Jehovah, and writers such as Isaiah naturally use these immemorial forms. Even Amos, who declines

the title of "prophet" (debased as it was in his time) and scorns the prophets' pretense of being the confidants of Jehovah's secrets (Am. 7:14 f.; 3:7 f.), does not disdain the method (Am. 7:1, 4, 7; 8:1; 9:1). But the content of the prophet's message as time goes on becomes more and more religious and moral. He is no longer concerned, like the seer, with questions as to where strayed asses are to be sought. In Isaiah's time the true prophet had become the statesman of Jehovah, to declare the divine purpose which his servant, Israel, must perform. Centuries later, when the writings of these men had become canonized, a Philo will undertake to define for his contemporaries what is implied in the prophet's "Thus saith Jehovah." As a theologian, and for the purpose of making apparent to all that the sacred writings do indeed contain a divine message, he will quite naturally insist upon the apparatus and mode of reception, taking all the references to spiritual sight and hearing in the most literal sense.

> For a prophet, says Philo, gives forth nothing of his own, but acts as interpreter at the prompting of another in all his utterances; and as long as he is under inspiration he is in ignorance, his reason departing from its place and yielding up the citadel of his soul, whereupon the Divine Spirit enters into it and dwells in it and plays upon the mechanism of his voice, sounding through it to the clear utterance of that which he prophesieth (*de spec. legg.* iv. 8).

We recognize here the favorite figure of the flute-player, which passes on through Jewish writers to

Christian. The Divine Spirit is the breath, the inspired speaker is a mere instrument. His faculties are so subordinated to the will of the Spirit that nothing of his own enters into the utterance, any more than the flute utters a melody of its own composition.[1]

Josephus uses almost the same language as Philo.

> For those who fancy that of themselves they can foretell the fortunes of men are all too weak to help saying what God suggests to them, or to resist His will; for when He has entered into us nothing that is in us is any longer our own (*Ant.* IV. vi. 5).

The conception is so completely familiar to us through even very modern writers that we have no need to give further examples.[2] The special interest

[1] So, for example, Athenagoras (*Leg. pro Christ.* ix.): "While entranced and deprived of their natural powers of reason the prophets uttered by the influence of the divine Spirit that which was wrought in them, the Spirit using them as its instruments, as a flute-player might blow a flute."

[2] For a representative statement the reader may be referred to *The Inspired Word,* a series of papers and addresses delivered at the Bible-Inspiration Conference, Philadelphia, 1887. Edited by Arthur T. Pierson. The Rev. James H. Brookes, D.D., author of the essay entitled "Theories of Inspiration" (pp. 145-165), maintains that "The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, controlling his speech and actions, without reducing him to the helpless condition of an unthinking machine (a protest against the designation 'mechanical' applied to this type of doctrine), and without changing his style or natural gifts and tendencies." To the objection that under his conception "the four accounts of the inscription on the cross of our Lord would have been precisely alike," he replies that it was the special design of God in the preparation of the Gospels that all four taken to-

of the passage from Josephus is that it tells us just whence it is derived. Balaam is supposed to be speaking, and Josephus is merely paraphrasing Numbers 23:1–12 to explain the nature of inspiration. He describes Balaam as prophesying "not as master of himself but moved to say what he did by the Divine Spirit." Hence Balaam says to Balak, "Thinkest thou that it is in our power to speak or be silent when the Spirit of God takes possession of us? For he causes us to utter words such as he wills and speeches without our knowledge."

But very manifestly Josephus in thus harking back to Balaam is not laying hold upon that element of Hebrew prophecy which gave it, as we have seen, its high distinction. It was its ethical content which raised Jewish prophecy above the mere half-heathen mantic and shamanism from which it sprang, while only telltale and obsolescent vestiges of its origin remained attached to the outward form of its message. Josephus is taking just the opposite course from that which he should have taken to follow the lead of the prophets themselves. He is shutting his eyes to the moral message which made Hebrew prophecy great in the genuine consciousness of speaking for the eternal God of truth and righteousness,

gether should form the complete inscription. For this reason "the Holy Ghost required the writers to arrange the words according to" this design (p. 164 f.). The illustration chosen by Dr. Brookes will show to what extent his doctrine of "verbal inspiration" differs from that of the ancient writers we have quoted, and whether it does or does not deserve the epithet "mechanical."

while he emphasizes those outworn elements of soothsaying and thaumaturgy which were the main reliance of the false prophets denounced by men like Amos and Jeremiah. The visions and vaticinations of the false prophets are indistinguishable from pagan mantic, and Philo and Josephus, when they ignore the difference in moral content, revert to this.

For what is there to differentiate this conception of inspiration as the displacement of the human reason and conscience by an outside power from the soothsaying of pagan oracles and mediums "possessed with a spirit of divination"? Philo's example is not indeed Balaam, but Abraham in the "trance" which came upon him "about the setting of the sun" (Gen. 15:12; cf. *Quis rerum divinarum heres,* 53). The sun, says Philo, here represents the light of human reason, which must set in order to give place to the Spirit of God.

> So long then as our mind shines and stirs about us, pouring as it were noontide brightness into every corner of the soul, we are masters of ourselves and are not possessed; but when it draws to its setting, then it is natural that the trance of inspiration should fall upon us, seizing upon us with a sort of frenzy. For when the divine light begins to shine, the human sets; and when the human sets below the horizon, the other appears above it and rises. This is what constantly happens to the prophet. The mind in us is expelled at the arrival of the Divine Spirit and returns again to its home at His removal. For it

> may not be that mortal dwell with immortal. So the setting of the reason and the darkness that gathers round it generates an ecstasy and heaven-caused madness.

Be the example chosen Balaam or Abraham, in the essential point, exclusion of the faculties of reason and conscience from their rightful control, Philo and Josephus hark back to heathenism. They stand at the opposite pole from the New Testament writers, who protest against such abdication of reason and conscience (I Thess. 5:19–21; I Cor. 12–14; cf. I Jn. 4:1 ff.). The Jewish writers in their eagerness to claim miraculous attributes for the sacred writings of their own people ignore the vital distinction of spiritual content, and turn back to such supposed characteristics of form as would most commend them to the heathen mind. What they are claiming for Abraham and the prophets is exactly the same which Lucan claims for the priestess who uttered the oracles for the Pythian Apollo: "The god enters into her, driving out her former mind, and compels everything that is human in her breast to give place to himself." Sanday rightly points out that the very language of Philo shows his purpose of assimilation to current heathen ideas of "inspiration."

> The words of which he is fondest, *χρησμός, λόγιον, μανία, ἱεροφάντης, ἱεροφαντεῖν, θεοφόρητος, ἐπιθειάζω, ἐνθουσιᾶν,* are characteristic of Greek "mantic," and especially of the application of it to philosophy by Plato. . . . In like manner it is from Neo-

> pythagoreanism that Philo gets the idea of the mystical vision of God. As compared with Josephus he lays greater stress on the ecstatic state in the recipient of revelation; the soul is wholly possessed and loses self-consciousness. . . . Josephus is simpler, and keeps closer to the Biblical accounts; he writes as a historian, and not as a speculative philosopher or theologian; but the underlying conception in both writers can hardly be said to differ.

In short, Jewish writers of the period of Jesus and Paul, when they attempt to speak "as speculative philosophers or theologians," or even as interpreters to the Gentile world of the marvelous value of their sacred books, unfortunately fail to stress those inward moral and spiritual characteristics which Jesus and Paul found in them, and which we of today would chiefly value. They revert to certain alleged miraculous and external characteristics of the prophetic writings not essential to their religious value, which are, however, of the same kind as these ascribed to heathen oracles and soothsaying. This is progress backward. It is difficult to believe that Isaiah and Jeremiah would have been satisfied with these well-meant attempts to explain the nature of their "inspiration." It was something else which distinguished them from the "false prophets."

CHAPTER II

HOW CHRISTIAN WRITERS CONCEIVE OF THEIR OWN INSPIRATION

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We have seen that the truly impartial and historical interpreter of Old Testament prophecy has no task more difficult than to determine just how much of the representation of trance, vision, or spiritual audition is meant as real experience, and how much is literary form and convention. The task is not easier in the New Testament. On the one side stands the undoubted case of Paul, caught away in ecstasy to the third heaven, where he hears things inexpressible, and cannot tell whether he was in the body or out of the body. On the other side stand a multitude of literary parallels of the same period, both canonical and uncanonical, in a large proportion of which similar experiences are related but certainly as matter of mere literary form. The fact of literary convention is certain, if only because in many instances the authors copy from one another. Among these literary products (mainly of the type known as "revelations" or "apocalyses") are many whose moral earnestness and sincerity are unquestioned, although the apparatus of transport to heaven, or mystical sight and hearing, is not

due to psychic temperament, but is as certainly a matter of literary convention as Kipling's scene of Tomlinson at the gate of heaven.

It is true that "visions and revelations of the Lord" were a source of wonder and admiration in the early Church, greatly sought after and even superinduced by fasting and ascetic practices. But not all the fishermen of Galilee were psychics, and Paul himself regards his own experience as exceptional, though he would have all his converts see "having the eyes of their heart enlightened," and hear with the inward ear. By such invisible organs of the soul "spiritual things are spiritually discerned." Contemporary utterances recorded in the Talmud use the conventional forms of vision and "voice from heaven" (*bath qol*) as mere modes of saying: "So the matter would appear if looked at from the spiritual point of view."

Again, if we take the authentic utterances of Mohammed in the Koran, his descriptions of ecstatic experience go far beyond those of Paul, and are honestly meant, even when he declares himself to have been miraculously transported from Mecca to Jerusalem in a moment of time. Here is real psychological experience, however illusive to the psychopathic subject. Mohammed describes his experience as it appeared to him. Commentators on the Koran, on the other hand, use the same or similar expressions in a sense which is not real but conventional. Mohammed and Paul were actual cataleptics. So were many of the ancient sooth-

sayers, whether by natural nervous constitution or by processes of self-hypnosis acquired by diligent and often painful asceticism. By slow degrees the transition is made through disciples, followers, and imitators to a use of the same terminology of mystical vision and audition which is unmistakably conventional, a pure literary form, as in the Talmud and many of the later apocalypses. Where, then, shall the line be drawn?

The distinctive feature in ancient belief was that mystical vision or audition corresponds to reality. Only those whose inward or spiritual eye is opened are cognizant of what transpires; but this makes no difference with the fact. Often the outward eye or ear is closed so that the inward may better perceive the true realities. A Luther might be in doubt whether the devil who tempted him at the Wartburg were a figment of his own brain or no, or the voice which interrupted his act of penitence on the Scala Santa crying, "The just shall live by faith," something more than the echo of his own unconscious thought. But, to the ancient, the experience had always an external cause. Evil spirits might delude, but true "vision" is a heaven-sent power to perceive what is actually transpiring behind the "veil" of sense. Hence at Elisha's prayer his frightened servant can be admitted to the same perception of the protecting hosts of God about them which gives fearlessness to the prophet (II Kings 6:14–17).

In New Testament times the same belief is still

dominant. Cornelius can see Peter, and Paul Ananias, performing the acts God directs them to perform (Acts 9:12; 10:3–6). Three persons (Mt. 17:1–9), or five hundred (I Cor. 15:6) can have the same vision at the same time without difficulty. The only requirement is that all should have "the eyes of the heart enlightened." This belief leads some whose nervous constitution or condition is abnormal to set a special value on impressions thus registered upon the mind. It leads others equally sure of having a message from God, but not pathologically affected, to avail themselves of the mode of speech characteristic of the mystic. They use the conventional terms for the purpose of conveying the "spiritual things" which they have "spiritually discerned." Not all who use the language of ecstatics in New Testament or Old are to be set down as "psychics." Something must be conceded to current modes of speech, as when Jesus says to the Seventy, on their return from a successful mission, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." Capernaum, too, is compared to the Lucifer of Isaiah 14:12 "exalted to heaven"; but when Jesus uses this figure and then goes on to say, "Thou shalt be cast down to Gehenna" he must be allowed to have some sense of the distinction between prose and poetry. A literary age uses the current coinage of conventional forms.

The task of the historical interpreter is to take account of the current beliefs of antiquity and their effect upon modes of speech and composition. The

task of the religious interpreter is to make such discrimination between form and substance that he may not take the shell for the living animal, but, recognizing life and motion, may see how knowledge grows from more to more in the apprehension of things really divine. When this is done he will not greatly marvel that an apostle like Paul should share the current belief regarding things seen and heard in ecstasy. He will rather wonder that Paul should refrain from all mention of this save when forced to "glory" while acknowledging that "it is not expedient." Most of all will he marvel that in other connections the Apostle should make it an absolute rule for the Church that "revelations" received under such abnormal conditions are not to be accepted as from God till they have been subjected to the tests of sober reason and conscience. The Apostle is not the creator but the critic of the convention.

Where, then, lies the superiority? It is not the mere fact that Paul shares the ecstatic gifts on which his Corinthian converts pride themselves that proves his greatness, but the fact that he *refuses* to place the Corinthian value on them. So with the prophets of Isaiah's time. They are not great merely because they paint in colors which rival or transcend those of the false prophets the splendid destiny of Israel. Some had a message of doom unrelieved. As has been well said, the prophets did not originate, they sublimated the messianic hope. They were great because they raised the accepted national hope to higher levels of moral and religious idealism. In-

deed, what else is the work of Jesus himself? How else does his conception of the messianic hope stand related to the ideals and expectations of his time?

We have already given instances from Philo and Josephus to show how largely Jewish conceptions of the nature of revelation and inspiration still partook of the common elements of ancient soothsaying. It would be easy to multiply these from other Jewish writings of the period. But there is no need. Nor would it be fair to Judaism of the time of Jesus and Paul; for even the age of still stricter legalism and bibliolatry which supervened after the breach with Christianity and the overthrow of the temple and its ritual had its protests against fanaticism. Rabbinic Judaism itself would not tolerate the dethronement of sober reason and conscience. In fact, we have already cited from the Talmud an example of rebellion against the attempt to make ecstasy and miracle the arbiters in matters of faith and practice, and have shown it to be contemporary with the Church's protest against Montanus.

It seems hardly credible that the same period in the history of the Synagogue should produce, on the one side, the bold defiance launched by Joshua ben Hananiah against the appeal of Eliezer ben Hyrcanos to supernatural attestation, and, on the other, claims of precisely the same supernaturalistic kind as those of Philo and Josephus, which rest the authority of Moses and the prophets on no better foundation than visions, miracles, and "voices from heaven." However, our own times do not lack examples of

the application of one style of reasoning to records contained within the canon, and a very different style to uncanonical testimony. The truth is that both Talmud and New Testament contain elements of both conceptions. Heathenish and Jewish, Jewish and Christian, stand side by side. In general, the same primitive and magical conception of inspiration which we find in Philo and Josephus pervades the Talmudic writings also. It is the current conception of the time, not distinguishable in any essential feature from pagan soothsaying, and only less prominent in the New Testament than in the Talmud. The striking thing is that the prophetic sense of moral and religious values is also present, biding its time to cast out the discarded shell.

Students of the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers hardly need to be told that the ordinary use of the canonical books of the Old Testament (and even of books, such as Enoch, which are no longer reckoned as canonical) by New Testament writers and their immediate successors, implies substantially the same ideas as those of Philo, Josephus, and the Talmud. To Paul, the prescription "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn" is a divine provision for teachers of the gospel in his own time who "tread out" spiritual sustenance for their hearers.[1] The use of the collective noun "seed" instead of the plural "seeds" in the promise

[1] In Synagogue nomenclature the expounder of Scripture is a "treader out" (*darshan*), and the spiritual nourishment he thus provides for the people is grain "trodden out" (*midrash*).

to Abraham is to the Apostle a "preaching of the gospel beforehand" by divine providence to preclude the idea that there could be in the end more than one people of God (Gal. 3:16). For the evangelists events occur "in order that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Clement of Rome declares that "the Scriptures are true, given through the Holy Ghost, and nothing unrighteous or counterfeit is written in them" (45:1). They are "sacred," "oracles of God" (53:1). Barnabas proves in how magical a sense he takes the conception by fantastic allegorizing of Scripture passages. Hermas, on the other hand (*Mandate* xi), gives elaborate directions for testing (contemporary) prophecy, because many

> practice soothsaying like the Gentiles, and bring upon themselves greater sin by their idolatries. For he that consulteth a false prophet on any matter is an idolater and emptied of the truth, and senseless. For no spirit given of God needeth to be consulted, but having the power of deity speaketh all things of its own accord, because it is from above, even from the power of the divine Spirit.

The Angel of Repentance thereupon instructs Hermas how he may distinguish a prophet from a false prophet. The man who has a divine spirit is first of all righteous in life, then

> when he cometh into an assembly of righteous men who have faith in a divine spirit, and inter-

> cession is made to God by the gathering of those men, then the (particular) angel of the (universal) prophetic Spirit who is attached to him filleth the man, and the man being filled with that holy spirit speaketh to the multitude according as the Lord willeth.

False prophets take money for their soothsaying, and otherwise manifest their moral unworthiness. Hermas makes no application of this principle of moral distinction to prophecy and false prophecy in Jeremiah's time, for the simple reason that he and his contemporaries regard the prophecy which comes down to them under canonical authority as having already received competent approval. But he and his fellow prophets and teachers of this period, such as the compiler of *The Teaching of the Twelve*, apply to *contemporary* prophecy rules for such discrimination. And these rules spring directly from the principles inculcated by Paul and "John."

It is apparent, therefore, that as concerns that servitude to the letter of which Paul complains in Judaism (II Cor. 3:6 ff.) Christianity does not emancipate itself at a single stroke. The protest is made in individual cases, as occasion requires. Just as Joshua ben Hananiah has little idea how far the principle he invokes would carry him if consistently applied, so even Paul only makes application of his own principle of the supreme authority of that Spirit which reveals itself as divine by its Christ-like attributes, to the particular vagaries of "prophecy" in Christian assemblies of his own mis-

sion field. This is, of course, even more patently the case with the supporters of the transmitted "rule of faith" against millenarian fanaticism in the days of Montanus. The principles are there in the life and teaching of Jesus, ready to be applied as issues develop in successive ages. But to each age its own. Issues are not settled in advance, save by analogy of precedent.

In spite of the fact that in some degree Rabbinic teaching shares with Christianity the great principle which distinguishes Old Testament prophecy from heathen manticism, and continues now and then to assert the authority of reason and conscience even against supernaturalism, the impartial historian will hardly venture to deny that as between Synagogue and Church it is the latter which reveals the larger liberty. The great rabbis who reconstructed Judaism after the overthrow of the temple, carried the example of Ezra to the acme in making the written Torah the foundation of their religious commonwealth. In higher degree than ever before Israel became "the people of the book." The Sadducee became a mere heretic. The scribe was supreme.

Talmudic enslavement to the letter of the written revelation has become proverbial; but in certain periods and among certain elements of the Church also a similar type of bibliolatry must be admitted to have prevailed. From the known history of our religion we could expect nothing else. Still, none will deny that, taken as a whole, it is Christianity,

rather than Judaism, which laid emphasis upon the progressive nature of revelation. The sense of moral values which distinguished prophecy from soothsaying was transmitted to Synagogue and Church alike. But the Church showed larger capacity to avail itself of the inheritance. Whether because of the splendid utterance of the Teacher whose authority in Galilee revived the memory of the great prophets of old, as he set his own message in bold opposition to what "they of old time" had said; or because of the thunderbolt declarations of a divinely inspired gospel which the great Apostle to the Gentiles launched against those who wished to reimpose the "handwriting of ordinances" written on tables of stone, Christianity has never quite forgotten the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

It was at a great price that this freedom was obtained. The bitterest and the most formidable opponents of Jesus had been the scribes and their blind followers, the Pharisees. It is true that at the very end Jesus' appeal to Israel took on a more political aspect. His act of prophetic symbolism in reforming abuses in the temple by virtue of a popular support which enabled him to set its priestly guardians temporarily at defiance came dangerously near the line of messianistic insurrection. But Pilate was loath to act. Even the Sadducean hierocracy in Jerusalem might have treated him as leniently as it treated Peter and John shortly after, had not the religious leaders of the Synagogue hounded on the hierocratic and secular powers. The Synagogue, and

not the temple, was the true seat of conflict. Jesus himself fell a victim to fanatical devotion to "the law and the prophets" in their literal application rather than their spiritual elements. For it was Jesus' uncompromising insistence upon their spiritual content which provoked opposition. They who sat in Moses' seat as official expounders of the meaning and authority of sacred Scripture denounced him as working in collusion with Beelzebub. Their still more ardent, because blinder, devotees, the Pharisees, became the executioners of the verdict, conspiring with the courtiers of alien and heathen powers to destroy his life. Bibliolatry kindled the flame. For scribe and Pharisee alike all else would have been tolerable save the liberties which the prophet of Nazareth had taken in his spiritual application of the Law and the Prophets. Contemporary Judaism was built on the traditional (in the main literal) interpretation of these. Whoever took a broader view, disregarding the tithing of mint and anise and cummin in favor of judgment and mercy and "the weightier matters of the law," undermined the fundamentals. It was not fit that such a fellow should be permitted to lead the people astray. Away with him! Crucify him. Crucify him!

Paul was forced to fight the same battle over again with "certain of the Pharisees who had believed" but had not thoroughly shaken off the old Pharisean yoke. These believers of Jewish origin had been able to apply the principle of redemption through the blood of the cross just so far as it had

been already carried. They were glad to accept forgiveness of sin "through the grace of the Lord Jesus" to make good possible deficiencies in their justification "by the law of Moses," but they fell back at once into the old habit of dependence on the letter of the written commandment the instant the times called for a wider application of Jesus' principle of freedom. Thus Paul had to renew the old conflict on a new battle-ground. Then, as now, advocates of the doctrine of progressive revelation found themselves still opposed by those who regard it as something static, bits "once for all delivered" of a complete mosaic of divine truth, which, when ultimately fitted together, will reveal the pattern shown in the Mount.

As far back as we can trace the history of religious thought, whether in Judaism or other religions of the book, this opposition of the static and the dynamic view of divine teaching has been present in principle, and in our own day there is no indication of its becoming less pronounced. On the whole, however, the candid historian must admit that it was the Church, rather than the Synagogue, which carried forward the succession of the dynamic interpreters, those who find the divine teaching of the Scriptures in the movement of the Spirit, in the giving way progressively of conceptions of the more outward and magical type to such as afford fuller expression to messages of moral and spiritual power. The Synagogue has been more largely under control of those who think of divine teaching as

given sporadically in the special circumstances of a given situation and environment. Indeed, after the violent breaking away of the Church from the Synagogue in consequence of the work of Jesus and Paul, how could we expect it to be otherwise than that the forces of bibliolatry, legalism, and literalism should rally to the Synagogue, while the Church (not indeed wholly free from these same deeply rooted tendencies) should give larger opportunity to the doctrine of the unceasing guidance of a living Spirit, continually reminding us of the things of Christ, but also leading us ever onward into the further knowledge of the truth.

It could not be expected that the primitive Church would distinctly formulate its dynamic conception of inspiration over against the static. Still less could it be expected to perfect a method for determining that movement of the revealing Spirit from lower to higher ideas of God which the dynamic view implies. Such action would be inconceivable in ages which had not so much as formed the idea of history in the modern sense of the word, to say nothing of applying the methods of critical analysis and evaluation which the modern historian applies to all ancient records as well as to contemporary testimony. Scripture itself contains in principle the means for developing a truly Christian evaluation. What inspired men have thought of their own message and its divine authority, and what they have thought of the messages of those who came before them, provides a basis for this development. But to define

this Christian doctrine in terms acceptable to the theological world is a task for centuries. Still more must that art be slow which attempts to construct a method of Scripture interpretation. When the method is such as to correspond with the Christian idea, distilling forth that quintessence of religious and moral value which generations have sought here (and not in vain), then we may congratulate ourselves on a truly great achievement. But the contribution of any one generation to this result must needs be small as compared with the whole. Only as we look back over the long centuries can we form some estimate of the outcome. Some great principles fortunately have been settled once for all.

CHAPTER III

"PRIVATE" INTERPRETATION AND INTERPRETATION APPROVABLE BY ALL

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In our day no interpretation of Scripture could stand which did not at least make the claim to represent the real meaning of the authors, considered as addressing their own contemporaries. Such has not always been the case. In earlier times it could be maintained that Scripture had one meaning for its writers and another for later generations.[1] It was experience of the boundless error and confusion introduced through the door thus thrown open to the fancy of any and every self-appointed interpreter that compelled the Church to put an end to "private" interpretation. The only alternative was interpretation such as to approve itself to all, and general approbation could be attained by no other means than self-denial in the natural desire to have a sacred book corresponding to one's own conception of what it ought to be. It is no small temptation to secure divine authority for the doctrines one would like to see prevail by interpreting the standards in our way rather than the authors' way. But standards that are accepted only among limited circles are proportionately discredited. Only his-

[1] I Pt. 1:10–12.

torical interpretation can hope to win general assent. Scripture must be made approvable to all, else it affords no standard.

Again, it was not enough to determine among more or less discordant copies of the transmitted text which manuscript or version, or what combination of manuscripts, versions, and other witnesses to the text, most nearly approximated to the original.[1] It was not enough even to determine by study of grammar and lexicon, and comparison with contemporary literature and history, what each individual Scripture writer intended as his own message to his age. The Bible was the book of God, comprising many messages for successive generations, and for the world. The chief need was to obtain God's message, and rightly to interpret it. There could be no right interpretation of *that* message which was petty or transient, or limited in time. After textual criticism has done its utmost we shall not have reached the kind of divine book the advocate of verbal infallibility would like to have. After philologian, grammarian, and archæologist have done their utmost we shall have no more than the best available interpretation of what the individual Scripture writers contributed to the religious life of their times. True interpretation of the canon as a whole for our times would necessarily involve an answer to the question: What does the whole mani-

[1] In his Prologue addressed to Pope Damasus (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* VI) Jerome demands: "If we are to pin our faith to the Latin texts it is for our opponents to tell us *which;* for there are almost as many forms of the text as copies."

festation mean for us? What is God's message to the ages in the formation, transmission, and canonization of this literature? A valid answer to these questions requires study of the history of religions and of religion, study of the psychology of religion, study of God in history. A "private" interpretation of this divine message can be easily obtained. The limbo of theoretical constructions on assumptions of what ought to be is full of them. An interpretation that will approve itself to the general judgment of thoughtful and conscientious men is another matter. But at least there is general acceptance to-day of "grammatico-historical" interpretation as indispensable.

History, as moderns understand the term, was not even attempted before the eighteenth century. Historical criticism in its various departments of the authentication, analysis, and evaluation of documents is an even more recent development. True, both textual and higher criticism had their beginnings in the biblical field. It is from students of the canonical literature that secular historians have had to learn the greater part of what they know as to critical method. For there were wonderfully scientific applications of these supposedly modern disciplines before the days of Eusebius. But the triumph of dogma in medieval times quenched the light of criticism. It may be said with substantial truth that until within the last two centuries there was no science of grammatico-historical interpretation. Jesus' sense and Paul's sense of moral and

religious value as the divine element in Scripture was still alive, but latent. It was not yet possible for the Church to use its sacred literature in a way to show that the evolution of Christian religious thought stands for the central line of progress in God's spiritual creation.

To-day historico-critical methods exist, and are applied by common consent to other literatures. And, as in all previous ages of the Church, there are also conservative masses who regard it as sacrilege that the holy books should be subjected to critical analysis. Light which breaks forth from the Scriptures through such openings is unwelcome. This does not, and from the nature of the case cannot, prevent Christians who wish to know how the revealing, redeeming Spirit of God has moved in the past and is still moving, from using this type of study and research. The ancient records are too full of meaning, too pregnant with new light and new life not to be used in the new way. Men have found and are finding God in them, a living, revealing, redeeming God, ever building new temples for Himself in the hearts of men. Wellsprings of living water such as these cannot be stopped up, nor men kept from them who have tasted of their spiritual refreshment. The best, the most scientific, the most searching methods available will continue to be applied to these records of God's spiritual creation, because men in search of God are determined to learn more and more of the evolution of spiritual life. The Bible cannot suffer from any method of real

study, any more than the sunbeam suffers when the spectroscope resolves it into its component rays. But the Church which opposes such research may suffer, and may sorely repent the day when it insisted on placing the resources of science in the hands of its enemies only. A timid clinging to the past on the part of religious conservatism has only too often produced disastrous results. For biblical criticism can be turned to destructive, rather than constructive, aims. It can be made a weapon against theories of sacred Scripture which the unthinking, both inside and outside the Church, conceive to be "fundamentals." But the greater danger is neglect and indifference due to obscuration of fundamentals that are really such.

Those who give themselves to the study of the Scriptures out of envy and strife will soon tire of slaying the slain. They need not be feared. Real biblical criticism is a delicate process of patient, scientific application. Nothing can long sustain it save faith in a true teaching of God combined with a genuine love for the truth. The textual and higher critics of the future will continue more and more to be what the greatest of them have been in the past, men of whom it could be said, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." They will be God-intoxicated men who listen for the movement of His Spirit across the ages as David's men listened for the token of the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees. The Church cannot but suffer that attempts to cast out such.

New Testament study for our times will necessarily employ the approved philological, historico-critical, and analytical methods of modern science. It will use the accumulated resources of two centuries of patient application to the restoration of the authentic text, and the equally marvelous accumulation of archæological, lexical, and grammatical apparatus. As a final stage in the enquiry, it will avail itself of those methods of research into the history of the records for which textual and lexical study are preliminary. To proceed from the known toward the unknown we must move backward in time. The last enquiry concerns the history of the material before it found embodiment in the canonical documents, and even before it assumed the form represented in the biblical writers' minds. This form of research, because it is ulterior to textual, has received the name "higher" criticism. These methods are modern, and as such must expect opposition from those who oppose everything that is not old. But neglect to apply any one of them would be worse than idleness and folly. It would be disloyalty to the truth, refusal to accept the Bible as its own interpreter, rejection of the guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

But the innovation will be far less than men suppose. Even as regards the methods in which we take highest pride as scientific achievements of the great modern age of historico-critical enquiry, we are still far from doing justice to Christian antiquity. The work of Origen as a textual critic will bear com-

parison with that of the greatest textual critics of modern times. The work of his disciple Dionysius in demonstrating that the Apocalypse of John cannot be by the same author as the Gospel ascribed to this Apostle is a masterpiece of the higher criticism which has few to equal it in our day. Indeed, were it not for the researches of Eusebius in the great library of Pamphilus "to show what ecclesiastical writers have from time to time made use of any of the disputed works (read in some of the churches), and what they have said in regard to the canonical and accepted writings, as well as in regard to those which are not of this class," modern critics would confront an almost impossible task. Eusebius is the very leader of the higher critics who attempt to trace these writings to their historical origin; and Eusebius himself followed in the footsteps of those second-century fathers who sought to meet Marcion's charges of violation of the records. The irony of the case is the fact that those very traditions of authorship in whose defense modern criticism is denounced are themselves the product of ancient criticism.

Christian scholars are not now, for the first time, brought face to face with the issue whether the Scriptures shall be interpreted historically, as products of their own times, or as magic oracles independent of local and temporal environment. This issue was decided in the early centuries of the Church, when the great school of Alexandria, heir to the theological views and modes of interpretation of Philo, advanced

its doctrine of allegorical interpretation against the historico-critical interpretation of the great teachers of Antioch. The Jewish doctrine of inspiration without coöperation on the part of the prophet or inspired writer, as defined by Philo, demands as its necessary corollary an allegorical method of interpretation. Otherwise the divine oracle will seem to have uttered things trifling or manifestly confuted by the event.[1] The Alexandrian fathers, accordingly, beginning with Pseudo-Barnabas, count it a merit to find volumes of subtle meaning in expressions which on the surface are irrelevant. Barnabas himself relates it as the most genuinely divine utterance which any man has ever learned from him, that the number of servants who accompanied Abraham in rescuing Lot was 318, because the *Greek* letters T I H, whose numerical equivalents are 300, 10 and 8, make up respectively the sign of the cross, and the first and second letters of the name of Jesus. Even Clement and Origen can indulge in occasional allegorical interpretations which plunge as deeply as this into absurdity.

A consistent doctrine of verbal inspiration finds some sort of arbitrary treatment of the text unavoidable. It may not go so far as the Alexandrian fathers; but if it meets an obvious misstatement, such as Paul's reference to the twenty-four thousand

[1] So Irenæus on the deeper meaning of Scripture which is "spiritual throughout" even though "all prophecy, till its accomplishment, is full of riddles and ambiguities to men" (*Haer.* II, xxviii. 2, 3: IV, xxvi. 1).

slain of Numbers 25:9 as "three and twenty thousand" (I Cor. 10:8) it feels bound for the honor of God to change the text in one passage or the other. If it finds Jesus declaring (Mt. 16:28): "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom," or Paul that "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:15–17), it refuses to take the words in the sense which they demonstrably bore to the writers and their contemporaries. Standards which can thus be manipulated by the users cease to be standards. The dogmatist can thus destroy his own footing. When he does, God takes a text and preaches humility.

The fatal objection with the allegorical and all other arbitrary and non-historical methods is their uncontrollable subjectivity. Like the historical school which ultimately replaced it, the school of allegorizing interpretation must have the credit of seeking that eternal truth that through all the ages continues to speak in the listening ear of conscience and reason. Subjective types of interpretation are rooted in the sincere desire to show honor to God. But they have no historical perspective. Refusing to take anything as from him that conscience and reason do not approve *in their own time,* interpreters of this type end by substituting for the record as God's providence has transmitted it something else of their own manufacture. Allegorizing inter-

pretation really puts the human before the divine. It was found in practical application that anything could be made to mean anything according to the fancy of the interpreter. There was no divine standard left, because every man twisted it to mean what he pleased. Thus Alexandrian allegorizing broke down of its own weight. The Antiochian principle of historical interpretation remained master of the field. The meaning of Scripture must be regarded as that, and only that, which its authors meant in addressing their own contemporaries.

Some of the first-fruits of the victory of truth were the great commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Psalms and the Epistles of Paul, still a source of light upon the meaning down to our own times. What if the literal sense be confessedly obsolete? Analogy remains. Application of Scripture is free but unauthoritative. Modern teaching cannot cloak itself with trailing clouds of glory borrowed from the devotion of the past. But it has better appreciation of the past than the Alexandrians, and is content to learn from it. In the course of centuries grammar, lexicon, and contemporary history and literature have become a bulwark of defense against distortion of the sense. Subjectivism is not indeed extinct. It will continue its attempts to make the Bible speak its language and proclaim its favorite conceits as long as the sacred writers enjoy an authority capable of exciting the cupidity of those who shrink from the arbitrament of reason and conscience. But the walls of scholarly research are already well founded.

Against this barrier the waves of interpretative fancy will henceforth beat in vain.

The triumph of the grammatico-historical method of Scripture interpretation over every type of arbitrary dealing with text or meaning, a triumph already won in principle by the great Antiochian interpreters of the fifth century, was simply another step along the line of progress marked out by Jesus and Paul. It is quite true, as Loisy says of the Founder of our faith and his great Apostle, that "it does not appear that in their teaching they desired to make any innovation so far as the extent or authority of the canon of their times are concerned." The same might be said of the attitude of Jesus and Paul toward current eschatology, or the institution of slavery. Nevertheless they sowed the seeds of revolution. The "received opinions" and the traditional institutions of the Jewish and of the Roman world which are undermined by their teachings do not crumble away because of "explicit decisions laid down by Jesus Christ and the Apostles," but because the fundamental principles on which Christ and the Apostles teach and act are found in course of time to be incompatible with them. How soon the rupture will come no man can foresee. The latent incompatibility is there. The discovery of it awaits a time when the need of the Church shall cause new light to break forth from the ancient book.

The time in which we live preëminently feels this need of new light. Conservatives justly demand that

criticism shall not be merely negative, but shall prove its worth to the multitude by making the Scriptures a greater source of spiritual life than in the past. Liberals should be well content to have it so; for after all this is the true test. Biblical critics apply their scientific methods to canonical writings rather than in some other field just because religion is more important to them than politics or sociology. The Bible has many pearls of literature, but it is not esthetic appreciation of their beauty as works of art that has made the history and criticism of Biblical literature a life-study for generations of the keenest minds. It is their relation to the history of religion. We have appealed to reason and conscience. But in the widest review the judgment of the Christian world will decide the case with reference to its moral and religious, not its intellectual or esthetic needs. We are indeed concerned with "fundamentals" in our time, and the first of fundamentals is: What do we mean by "the word of God"? If there is a difference between heathen and Old Testament conceptions on this point it is time it were brought out. If there is a difference between the ideas cherished by Jewish writers, scribes, and Talmudists of New Testament times and the ideas of Jesus and Paul, the conditions of our own time make it incumbent on those who hold this view to make this also clear.

On the one side we are told that there was no such difference. When the Jews took up stones to stone Jesus for blasphemy he answered (Jn. 10:34):

> Is it not written in your law, "I said, Ye are gods" (Ps. 82:6)? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (*i.e.*, judges, who gave decisions as from "God," Ex. 21:6), and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Here the parenthetic reference to current belief, "The Scripture cannot be broken," is taken by some to show that there was no difference between Jesus' use of Scripture and that of those who wished to stone him for blasphemy.

Again, Jesus' reference to the story of Jonah has been held up as an official settlement of the question whether the story of the prophet rescued by the great fish should be regarded as a tale with a moral or as conveying historic fact. If there is no difference between Jesus' use of Scripture and that of the scribes this can be argued. Or, again, it has been maintained by some who were willing to expose to shipwreck the simple faith of believers on a question of historical and literary criticism, that Jesus' acquiescence in current opinion regarding the authorship of the Psalms imposes a peremptory veto upon consideration of the question whether Psalm 110 (which he quotes as an utterance of David "in the Spirit") may not be, as the acrostic of its opening lines suggests, the coronation ode of "Simon" the Maccabee, corresponding to the occasion depicted in I Maccabees 14:25–49. If there

is no difference between Jesus' use of Scripture and contemporary Jewish use the Church must take the risk that the decision on this question of pure literary criticism will turn against her, to the collapse of all her authority.

On the other hand, there are not a few who see a difference, and who not only recognize that Jesus' teaching from the Scriptures was "not as the scribes," but have taken at least some steps toward defining the nature of this difference and showing on what it rests. Thus, Glover notes in his *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (p. 126):

> In all his (Jesus') quotations of the Old Testament that have reached us there is no trace of servitude to the letter and no hint of allegory. He does not quote Scripture as his followers did. Here, too, he spoke as having authority. If sometimes he quoted words for their own sake it was always as an *argumentum ad hominem.* But his own way was to grasp the writer's mind—a very difficult thing in his day, and little done—and to go straight to the root of the matter, regardless of authority and tradition.

Similar testimony is borne by Wendt in his *Teaching of Jesus,* and many others of less authority. As Glover justly notes, Jesus' superiority is not that of the scientist or critical historian, but that of the prophet and true religious seer. "His freedom in dealing with the prophets came from his inner sympathy with the prophetic mind. He read, and understood, and decided for himself."

It was indeed nothing else save Jesus' unerring instinct for religious and moral values, the true instinct of the prophet, that led him to the heart of the Old Testament, to the disregard of books such as the Song of Songs, which Akibah a century later by means of allegorizing and forced interpretation could declare to be "the holy of holies" of Scripture.

The same sense of religious values led Jesus to new applications glorifying the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi. He treated the Scriptures neither as critic nor as theologian. He volunteered no authoritative verdict in the current debate as to whether Ecclesiastes does or does not "defile the hands." Neither does he pronounce upon the authorship of the Pentateuch or the historicity of Jonah. But his mode of treatment of both books is instructive. He compares the summons to repent God sent to the Ninevites through Jonah with the unheeded summons God had sent to "this generation" through John.[1] If his hearers were not "pricked in their hearts," it was not for lack of searching application of the parallel. He also manifests his disdain for the selfish, Epicurean philosophy of the "Solomon" of Ecclesiastes by his parable of the rich man whom God called a "fool" because he heaped up riches knowing not who should gather them. He followed up this parable with the wonderful discourse on the theme, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance

[1] On John (not Jesus) as the "greater matter than Jonah" see below, p. 80, and Bacon, *Sermon on the Mount,* Macmillan, 1902, p. 232.

of his possessions," showing how God provides for the ravens which have neither store-chamber nor barn, and clothes the lilies of the field more richly than "Solomon in all his glory" (Lk. 12:13–31). That was more than a historical criticism of Ecclesiastes. It was a new way of using Scripture unlike that of the scribes.

How trifling is the question of the pedigree of the Messiah with which the scribes concern themselves, as compared with the authority which God actually confers upon his representative by exalting him to sit at the right hand of power! As we have seen, Jesus appeals to a Psalm currently ascribed to David. That is an authority which his opponents, the scribes, will not deny. Let us suppose that the acrostic letters which spell the name "Simon" by means of the beginnings of its principal lines prove it to be (as leading critics maintain) not a composition of David, but the ode of some inspired poet from the great days of the Maccabees, when freedom to worship God had been won, the sanctuary restored, and a grateful people tendered the joint office of high priest and king to Simon, survivor of the group of heroic sons of Mattathias. The story is told in I Maccabees 14:25–49 how his people made themselves a "freewill offering" in the day of his power, making him both high priest and "prince of the people of God," although he was by descent neither of the house of Zadok nor of the house of David, and inscribing their action for perpetuity on tablets of bronze set up in the temple. Let us sup-

pose that this psalm, which plays so great a part in the thought of New Testament writers, was not, as they imagine, written by David, but expresses the messianic hope of those who offered the double crown of priest and king to him whom they looked upon as the savior of God's people. Does Jesus' comparison of this loftier messianic ideal with the scribal insistence on literal Davidic descent suffer serious detriment from the mere fact that both parties are in error as to the date and authorship of the Scripture adduced? Whether it be Jesus himself, or disciples who after his death and exaltation as Son of Man to "the right hand of God," place this utterance on his lips over against scribal insistence on the letter, the true point at issue is the higher as against the lower messianic ideal. And the higher ideal is that of the Maccabean poet, not that of the scribes; albeit even the psalmist's ideal itself falls far below the Christian.

Such use of Scripture as this proves nothing with regard to questions of authorship or canonicity save that Jesus (like his contemporaries) assumed that the Psalms in general were David's. It proves a great deal as regards insight into the religious values of Scripture. For either Jesus, or those who ascribe to him this utterance,[1] used it to lift the whole conception of Messiahship to a higher level. The use of Scripture here is uncritical, but directed by a sense of moral and religious values. Jesus does not

[1] See Bacon, *Beginnings of Gospel Story*, p. 175, on the question of authenticity.

make authoritative pronouncements on questions of literary criticism. He supplies a more vital and effective factor. He sets practical examples of moral and religious application, and this in the end leads to the displacement of rabbinic theories of Scripture by such as better deserve to be called Christian.

The Bible is thus truly its own "best interpreter." There are no other correctives of unworthy, magical, or outworn doctrines of inspiration and revelation half so cogent as those the Scriptures themselves supply through the long ages of struggle for the higher against the lower, the spirit as against the letter, which are covered by its record. It is the movement which counts, not the position at any given stage. The line of direction and the forward impulse—by these the Scriptures furnish us with the help that is from God. The token of the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees was not given to David's men to point out for them a safe camping ground, but to prove that "Jehovah is gone out before you to smite the host of the Philistines."

New Testament study for our times involves, therefore, complete loyalty to grammatico-historical interpretation as the only known safeguard against abuse of the authority of Scripture in the interest of "private interpretation." Immense strides have been made since Reformation times in the direction of such impartial objectivity, whether as regards removal of corruptions from the text, establishment of linguistic usage, or historical situation to which the writings were addressed by their authors. Dis-

loyalty to these would be nothing less than treason to the Bible.

But if the use of Scripture by Jesus and Paul so "transcends current rabbinical methods" that we are entitled to speak of a Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture in distinction from pagan or Jewish, then defense of the methods of grammatico-historical interpretation is but the lesser part of our task. The immediate exigency of the times may compel us to hold in check the misguided efforts of reaction by the reminder that never once in all the long history of the progress of truth has it begun with the majority, but always against it. Even numerical majorities have no right to impose dogmatic limits on the freedom of enquiry of those whom Christ calls "my brother, my sister, and my mother," because they truly seek to "do the will of his Father." Any such attempt would be the expression not of democracy but of demagogy in the Church. It would differ in no essential respect from the effort of those "Pharisees who had believed," whom Paul resisted, bidding the Galatians, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free."

The "yoke of bondage" against which Paul warned was an interpretation of Scripture according to "the letter that killeth," instead of "the Spirit which giveth life." Doubtless we have a duty to that ever advancing Spirit, which leads successive generations of believers forward into the fuller understanding of Christ, causing, for each, "new light to break forth from the Scriptures." It is a duty

to defend the use of every scientific method made available to the progressive Bible student by the advance of scholarship, culture and enlightenment. For beyond all else that science can supply, the Spirit has need of these things. But this is but the lesser part of the task. Mere defense of the right to build is not building. The Christian student of Scripture in our time needs to take from the example of Jesus and Paul something higher than critical method, something greater than history and archæology. We need to take that sense of moral and religious values which enabled them, in spite of scientific limitations which they shared with the Synagogue of their time, "to penetrate more deeply to the heart of the Old Testament teaching."

CHAPTER IV

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NOTHING is more certain about the career of Jesus than that he perished a martyr to a more living, free, and progressive interpretation of the Scriptures, a victim to the conservatives of temple and Synagogue, both of whom built upon the inspired authority of Moses, though bitterly at odds among themselves. Few will deny that Jesus also rested upon the inspired authority of the past. The conditions of the time would have imposed it quite apart from his inclination. But his use was "not as the scribes."

The conservatives of the conservatives in Jesus' time were the sons of Zadok, the Sadducees, masters of the temple and its ritual, holding to their priestly revenues and power by virtue of the Pentateuchal law. The Law of Moses made them powerful and rich. It gave them control over the temple, the strongest fortress and the richest bank in Syria; naturally they resented an attempt on the part of the Galilean Prophet to restore it to the religious ideal long before proclaimed, that it should be "a house of prayer for all nations." The Sadducean priesthood and their corruptions and worldliness perished with it. When the temple that "the hissing brood of

Annas" had made a den of robbers was destroyed forever by the Roman torch, there were few to mourn the fate of the Sadducees. The generation which witnessed its destruction, Christian and Jewish alike, has nothing for them but hatred and contempt. They are not remembered as the priestly nobility, descendents of the Maccabbean heroes who restored the temple along with national independence and founded a dynasty of priest-kings in Jerusalem "after the order of Melchizedek." By New Testament writers and rabbis alike they are remembered simply for their rejection of the newer doctrine of the times, the doctrine of resurrection and a world to come, brought in by the Pharisees. To the later times the Sadducees are simply the Jewish sect which "deny the resurrection, holding that there is neither angel nor spirit."

In Jesus' time the hierocratic nobility, the temple orthodoxy, had become the strict constructionists of Mosaism, allowing no innovation, but clinging to the old nationalistic and political messianic hope. With the downfall of the temple, the Synagogue denounced the Sadducean unbelievers as heretics. In like manner second-century Christianity condemned as heresy the Ebionism of the Palestinian churches which, rejecting Paul, had maintained strict Mosaism and a Davidic rule in the family of Jesus. The conservatives of one generation become the heretics of the next. The conservatives of the temple hierocracy were doomed to this fate.

The conservatives of the Synagogue in New Tes-

tament times were the scribes, official expounders of the Torah, supported by their docile followers the Pharisees, devotees pledged to blind obedience in hope of divine intervention and a "share in the world to come." This is Judaism substantially as we know it; for after the disappearance of the temple and its guardians, the Sadducees, nothing stood in the way of the scribes as rebuilders of the hope of Israel. Henceforth Judaism was to be a religion under the exclusive leadership of the Synagogue. Indeed, even in Jesus' time real influence with the people had already passed from temple to Synagogue. Jesus never so much as came in contact with the Sadducees until he attempted his reform in the temple. Then the priests acted. They became the immediate instruments of Jesus' death. But the real conspirators were the scribes, hand in hand with their tools, the Pharisees. Whether for their religion's sake or their own, the scribes were intensely jealous of Jesus' popular following. To them his gospel was "blasphemy," his works of healing were due to collusion with Beelzebub. To the Pharisees, Jesus was a contemner of the Law, an associate of loose livers and apostates. Some appreciation of the two types of conservatism in Jesus' day, the conservatives of the temple and the conservatives of the Synagogue, and the dependence of both on biblical authority, is required before we can fully answer the question: How does Jesus' conception of the authority of Scripture differ from theirs?

Since the generation which has given us the Gos-

pels took no interest in Sadducean party principles it is natural that we should have but one record of any encounter of Jesus with the Sadducees on doctrinal grounds. Indeed, the Sadducees *had* no specific doctrine, save to cling to the letter of the Torah, resisting and ridiculing the new-school teaching of a life to come. For this doctrine championed by the Pharisees required very elastic application of the writings of Moses to bring it under the cover of his authority. But Jesus, like Paul (Acts 23:6), is a Pharisee on this issue. He makes this elastic application, using the Scripture with extraordinary disregard of the letter and equally remarkable penetration to the spirit. The instance is an example well worthy of study. It offers a clew to what Jesus meant by "knowing the Scriptures." But we are now concerned with his direct rebuke of the whole attitude of the Sadducean party, in particular for their treatment of Scripture itself, because they fail to penetrate to its really vital teaching and use it merely to support their own place and power. "Jesus said unto them, Is it not for this cause that ye err, that ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God?" They were rooted to a dead past, from which they might have been delivered had they really used the Scriptures on which they professed to stand. But no; in reality they "knew not the Scriptures." For this reason they also lacked belief in a living God, whose working is not confined to the narrow limits of what they of old time may have thought or said.

For once Jesus' sympathies were with the scribes and Pharisees. For on one issue at least the Pharisees themselves stood against the ultra-conservatives of the temple, the Sadducees, whose hope was for this world, and this world only. It was a question of the interpretation of Scripture (this could not fail to be the case under the conditions of the time), and Jesus justified the Pharisees in their bold innovation.

The new doctrine of the Pharisees really effected a far-reaching transformation in the national religion by introducing the principle of "otherworldliness." In the reign of John Hyrcanus I (135–105 B.C.) the increasingly worldly ambitions of the later Maccabees brought about a reaction on the part of the Chasidim, the devout patriots who had fought only for freedom to worship Jehovah and who took small interest in the political intrigues and nationalistic aspirations of the court party. When it came to the point of sacrificing the blood and treasure of the people for the aggrandizement of the dynasty there came open rupture and civil war. Alexander (104–78 B.C.) suppressed a bloody revolt led by the Pharisees and greatly extended his dominions by conquest. But his widow, Alexandra (78–69 B.C) reversed his policy. In the words of Josephus "she had the name of regent, but the Pharisees had the authority." They used it to make Judaism a religious rather than a political power.

With the triumph of Pharisaism under Alexandra the hope of Israel had practically ceased to be a

kingdom of this world. The Apocalyptic writers, beginning with Daniel, had transferred the scene of conflict to the heavenly places. The Pharisees had made deliverance a hope for "the world to come." All save Sadducees and Zealots looked for a divine intervention which waited only on Israel's obedience to the Law. Thus the whole center of gravity of religion had been transferred from earth to heaven. For Mosaism is a religion so preëminently nationalistic and of this world that Bishop Warburton in the once-famous apology, *The Divine Legation of Moses,* could argue for its superhuman origin by virtue of its contrast with contemporary religions in just this respect, that it ignores the doctrine of immortality. Being such, how could Mosaism be adjusted to this revolutionary transformation? How could it learn to set its affection on things above, not on things on the earth, without a latitude of interpretation of the law and the prophets at least as great as anything demanded in modern times?

Pharisaism in its golden days had been equal to this reconstruction of religion. The figures of speech of Ezekiel and Isaiah, in which the restoration of Israel after extinction of its national life had been compared to raising up from Sheol, a renewal of the first redemption out of the Egyptian "house of bondage," were taken in the literal sense. They were given a new application to deliverance from the darkness and the shadow of death, from earthly misery into the freedom and glory of "the world to come." The religion of the Synagogue in Jesus'

time expressed this (and still expresses it) in the ancient prayer called the *Shemoneh Esreh.* He who reads it will see at once what Jesus means when he rebukes the Sadducees because they know neither the Scriptures (whose essential meaning is that the living God made this people his own by covenant with the patriarchs), nor "the power of God," who in his own way is "faithful" to his covenant, even to the "quickening of the dead."

> i. Blessed art thou, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, great, mighty and tremendous, bestower of gracious favor and creator of all things, who rememberest the piety of the patriarchs and wilt bring a Redeemer to their posterity for the sake of thy Name in love. O King, who bringest help and healing and art a Shield. (Refrain?) Blessed art thou, O Lord, the Shield of Abraham.
>
> ii. Thou are mighty forever, O Lord; thou restorest life to the dead. Thou are mighty to save; who sustainest the living with beneficence, quickenest the dead with great mercy, supporting the fallen and healing the sick and setting at liberty those who are bound, upholding thy faithfulness to those who sleep in the dust. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, the Almighty? Or who can be compared unto thee O King, who killest and makest alive again, and causest help to spring forth? Faithful art thou to quicken the dead. (Refrain?) Blessed art thou, O Lord, who restorest the dead.

Here is an instance in which even pre-Christian Jews in the fire of a supreme crisis of their religion had "transcended current rabbinical methods in a

manner to penetrate more deeply to the heart of Old Testament teaching." Indeed, they might be said to have passed quite beyond it; for as a mere matter of historical interpretation the Sadducees were nearer the truth than they. The Pharisees had been driven by force of national catastrophe to indulge a larger hope. Not by Platonic argument, not by definite enunciation of the scientific principle of historical interpretation, but by sheer force of religious insight they disregarded the letter of Law and Prophets to seize upon the heart of the teaching, the hope of a world to come. In this radical departure they have the sympathy of Jesus. The resistance of the Sadducees does not, to him, prove their greater faithfulness to Moses. It proves only their ignorance of the real message of the Scriptures, and their lack of faith in the power of the living, covenant-keeping God. Jesus' warrant for his interpretation is neither grammar nor history, but simple faith in the living God.

But contemporary scribes and Pharisees had not maintained this freedom of the earlier time. There were indeed teachers such as Hillel even in Jesus' day who could declare: "What thou wouldest not that another should do to thee do not to him; this is the Torah, the rest is commentary"; and there were those who could say in the spirit of an Isaiah: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." [1] But the general tendency was toward

[1] Mk. 2:27 α text. The saying fails to appear in the β text and is absent from both Matthew and Luke. D inserts it after

legalism and biblicism. Disregard of the appointed weekly fasts in order to make fasting a real expression to the Father that seeth in secret of heartfelt sorrow and contrition was in their eyes to be a "glutton and a wine-bibber." Disregard of the minutiæ of Sabbath observance, even on grounds recognized by the broader-minded of the rabbis themselves ("danger to life dispels the Sabbath"), had become among the Pharisees of Jesus' time reason sufficient for them to plot with the Herodians against his life. Then Jesus again proves how he can "penetrate to the heart of Old Testament teaching." In the example of David and his men eating the shew-bread taken from the altar he silences the pettifogging complaint against his disciples, and when his own healings are impugned, turns indignantly on the conspirators with the question: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?" Is it they, or he, who reflect the true spirit of Moses' commandment: "These things do *that thou mayest live?*"

Is it that Jesus had anticipated the discoveries of the Graf-Kuenen-Wellhausen criticism; is it because he understood the discrepancies of the national religion as presented in the period of the prophets with that of the post-exilic Priestly Law-book, that

Lk. 6:10. On the other hand, it is a typical utterance of the liberal school of Pharisaism, quoted in *Joma* 85 and *Mechilta* on Ex. 31:13. We have no alternative but to recognize it as an addition by a Christian transcriber resting on kindred Synagogue teaching. See Dalman, *Worte Jesu,* p. 215.

he so promptly refutes the legalists out of their own code by appeal to the unsophisticated story of David's dealings with Ahimelech the priest, at the sanctuary at Nob? Had he already, as a higher critic, classified the humanitarian motive on which the law of the Sabbath is based in Deuteronomy 5:14b, 15 with the prophetic conception of fasting and Sabbath-keeping in Isaiah 58, and contrasted this with the ritualistic motive on which it is based in the P form in Exodus 20:11? Is it for this reason that he insists that the sacerdotal conception of ritual is not the only one in Scripture, and bids the cavillers, "Go, learn what that meaneth, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice' "? There is no need of so far-fetched an explanation. A simple, intuitive sense of moral and religious values will enable one who "knows the Scriptures" to discriminate between the transient and the permanent in their teaching. Any one that is willing to be taught of God can learn to distinguish that portion which may justly be called "divine" because it belongs to the far-reaching purpose of an eternal, self-revealing Power that makes for Righteousness (a purpose far transcending the comprehension even of those who by divers portions and in divers manners become from age to age its vehicles). There is another factor which is rightly discriminated as relatively "human," because, however beautiful to the eye and ear of artist in rhetoric, or instructive to the antiquarian, it has only a remoter bearing on the essential message of Scripture. For the essential message of

Scripture is "the gospel of the reconciliation." That "testimony of Jesus" is the spirit of prophecy. Not as scientist, critic, or historian, but simply as one that is taught of God, receiving all his "traditions" [1] from the Father, does Jesus "penetrate to the heart of Old Testament teaching."

If we turn to the story of Jesus' controversy with the jealous scribes who came down from Jerusalem, decrying his work and seeking to detach his Galilean following by the charge, "He casteth out by Beelzebub," we shall obtain still clearer insight into the distinctive quality of his use of Scripture. Buried in the records of a past revelation and blind to that of their own times, these occupants of Moses' seat had not even repented themselves afterwards when they beheld the publicans and sinners repenting at the preaching of John. Even now they were holding in their grasp the keys of the kingdom (their better knowledge), themselves not entering in, and hindering those that would enter. They demand of Jesus "a sign from heaven." He offers them the great sign of the times, the token of the coming of Jehovah to execute judgment, "the baptism of John." For to Jesus the Baptist was in a true sense "Elias that was for to come." John's summons to Israel, "Repent, for the kingdom is at hand; after me cometh he that winnoweth the threshing floor,

[1] Mt. 11:27 = Lk. 10:22. In the phrase "All things are delivered to me by my Father" the term "delivered" is the technical expression for learning handed down. The speaker contrasts his own religious consciousness, which is "taught of God" as a son is taught by his father, with the traditional lore of the schools.

gathering the wheat into his garner and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire," was the message of a prophet, and more than a prophet, the herald of Jehovah's coming. As Jonah had come to the Ninevites, without a sign, proclaiming only: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," so John had come with warning to this generation as the last. He was sent to "turn the heart of this people back again," as Elijah had done at Carmel, that the Coming might not smite them with a curse. As a whole, the Israel of Jesus' time turned a deaf ear. The Ninevites had repented. They of the Synagogue held aloof. Therefore in the judgment the Ninevites would meet the better fate. Such is the substance of Jesus' answer to the demand. The difference between his use of Malachi and Jonah and that of the scribes is that, to him, the story of Elijah at Carmel, that of Jonah at Nineveh, and the cry of Malachi for reform have a meaning for "the times." They cry out for application to his own time, the urgent, inexorable present. They speak to him of the living God, whose day is "at hand." To the scribes, they are revelations and oracles of the past, utterances of wonderful prophets whose tombs they build while they disregard their plea. The spirit of the scribes toward the prophets' message is in essence the same as that of their fathers who stoned them.

When Jesus speaks of the baptism of John as a fulfillment of the expectation of the coming of Elijah to effect the Great Repentance before the

Day of Jehovah's coming, he makes plain the difference between his own use of Scripture and that of the scribes. The scribes say: When Elijah comes he will sift pedigrees (*Edujoth* viii. 7). Jesus says: He will turn the heart of the children (Israel) back to the Father,[1] as at Carmel; *and this Great Repentance is now at work.* The turning of the publicans and sinners at the warning of John *is:* "Elias that should come." This is the point of Jesus' rebuke of his generation. He makes the difference even clearer when the question relates to his own mission. And in this case it is not the sneering scribes alone, but the doubting Baptist himself to whom the teaching is also directed. The scribes had scoffed at Jesus' exorcisms as wrought by collusion with Beelzebub. Jesus replied by pointing out that the works were not his, but his Father's. The casting out was "by the finger [or as moderns would say, 'the hand'] of God." The inference was that the Prince of this world, however strong, was already giving way to the Stronger-than-he. Yet Israel's blind leaders of the blind cannot see it. The kingdom of God has "overtaken them unawares." [2] It is in the midst of them, yet they are expecting it to "come with observation," and crying, "Lo here,

[1] There is perhaps a difference of text as well as of interpretation. That followed in *Edujoth* obviously coincides with our own of Malachi 4:6. But Ecclesiasticus 48:10 quotes the verse in a form corresponding to that given above. Jehovah's wrath is turned away from "the tribes of Jacob" by the Great Repentance of Elijah, thus the "Father" is reconciled to the erring sons.

[2] Such is the literal sense of the Greek, Mt. 12:28 = Lk. 11:20.

lo there," like men groping in the darkness. To him it is like leaven, or like a grain of mustard-seed, unseen, unnoticed, but working with the silent, all-subduing power of God. The healings, the deliverances, the manifestations of gratitude for sins forgiven, that accompany his message—these are to him "the Spirit [in Matthew 'the finger'] of God."

The fourth evangelist connects similar teaching with the story of the man born blind (Jn. 9:1 ff.). The Pharisees say to the healed: "This man is not from God because he keepeth not the Sabbath." The scribes make an elaborate investigation and threaten expulsion from the synagogue. Then they instruct the healed: "Give the glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner." When pressed to say why God should hear the prayer of such a "sinner" they reply: "We know that God hath spoken unto Moses, but as for this man we know not whence he is." God works, but only yesterday and to-morrow; never to-day. God speaks with the trumpets of Sinai and the judgment day, but never with the still small voice of reason and conscience; never through the Spirit of adoption that testifieth with our spirit that we are born of God! So the successor of Paul at Ephesus depicts the difference between Jesus' "light" and that of blind scribes and Pharisees (Jn. 9:1—10:21).

It is the same "works of the Christ" which are appealed to in Jesus' reply to the messengers of God. Queries as to his own personality and future mission are deprecated. Many are likely to be "stum-

bled" on these points, especially if, like the Baptist, they have entertained expectations of "him that should come," based largely on Malachi's warnings of the coming fire of judgment. But the messengers can report "what they see and hear"; and in order that its significance may not be lost upon them the work is summed up in the figures (and indeed the very language) of the great prophet of the consolation of Israel. As Isaiah had predicted of the greater redemption to which Israel of the exile should look forward, so it was already coming to pass:

> The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead (people of Jehovah) are restored to life, His "poor" receive a proclamation of glad tidings.[1]

The more specific application of this passage from Isaiah 61:1–4 to the work of Jesus which is made in the so-called "programmatic discourse" of Luke 4:16–21, opening the description of the ministry with a typical scene of Jesus' preaching in the synagogue of his native town, is less reliable than that we have quoted from the so-called Q material, so that, apposite as it is to our purpose, we can only appeal to it in indirect support of our contention. It appears to be our own canonical evangelist "Luke," who in this typical scene is making use of the Isaian reference employed in the source from

[1] Is. 35:5 ff.; 26:19; 29:18 f.; 61:1–4 summarized in Mt. 11:5 = Lk. 7:22. For similar adaptation of the Isaian figures compare Shemoneh Esreh ii., quoted above, p. 75.

which he draws in common with our first evangelist (Mt. 11:5=Lk. 7:22). It is well, however, to note how fully the later writer is justified in his depiction of the scene which he makes typical of the ministry as a whole. "Luke" simply follows the example set. What Jesus really does in sending his pregnant answer to John is precisely this. He does apply to his own ministry Isaiah's sense of his calling to proclaim a gospel of peace and reconciliation:

> The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me;
> Because Jehovah hath anointed me to proclaim glad tidings unto the poor.
> He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
> To proclaim liberty to the captives,
> And opening of the prison (or "the eyes" to them that are bound;
> To proclaim the year of Jehovah's grace.

The point we are seeking to establish is a simple one, fully borne out by either of the passages here quoted. It is clear from either or both that Jesus did appeal to the "glad tidings" of Isaiah as a parallel to his own ministry, just as he applied the promise of Malachi 4:5f. in interpreting the significance of the ministry of John. Both instances show the same distinctive freedom and penetration to the heart of the Old Testament teaching. Indeed, the two applications of Scripture are combined in one. Jesus places his own ministry side by side with that of the great Forerunner, in order to make it the gravamen of his reproof of "the cities in which

most of his mighty works were done," that they had rejected both warning and entreaty, both the funeral dirge of the ascetic of the wilderness, and the wedding song of the Friend of publicans and sinners.

In this great discourse on the Baptism of John, Jesus' mission is presented as the supreme effort of "the Wisdom of God," that gentle Spirit of divine entreaty and forgiveness which in the writings of Israel's sages is always depicted as seeking to restore the lost and wayward sons of men. Ever rejected by human folly "Wisdom" finds justification for efforts wasted on the self-righteous, despised by the wise in their own conceit, in the welcome she receives among the "little ones" who are her "children" (disciples). She is that yearning, redeeming agency of God of whose relation to Israel it was written (II Chron. 36:15):

> Jehovah, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of Jehovah rose against his people, till there was no remedy.

It is therefore from an unknown poetic plaint of this "Wisdom of God" [1] that our evangelists have

[1] In Lk. 11:49–51; 13:34f. the citation is duly accredited: "Wherefore the Wisdom of God (not the title of a book but of a literature) saith." Mt. 23:34–39 gives the text unbroken, but suppresses the marks of quotation.

drawn their description of Jesus' parting utterance as he turns away from the doomed temple and the disputing scribes and Pharisees:

Behold, I send unto you prophets and sages and scribes;
Some of them ye will kill and crucify,
And some of them ye will scourge in your synagogues,
And persecute from city to city.

That upon you might come all the righteous blood shed
on the earth,
From the blood of Abel the righteous
Unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah,*
Whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets,
And stonest them that are sent unto thee!
How often would I have gathered thy children together,
Even as a mother-bird gathereth her brood under her
wings!

And ye would not.
Behold your house is left to you forsaken.
For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth
Till ye say, Blessed is (the messenger) that cometh in
the name of Jehovah.

Literary form and style in this superb presentation of the Teaching of Jesus must probably be ascribed, as in all similar cases in contemporary literature, to the primitive evangelist, he who conceives the Master's work as that of a supreme incarnation of "the Wisdom of God." But this source (Q) is the oldest and most authentic that we have. It unquestionably gives us a true picture

* A mistake for "Jehoiada." See II Chron. 24:17–22, and compare Zech. 1:1.

of the substance of Jesus' appeal to his own work and that of John as present-day evidences of that undying, redemptive activity of God on behalf of his people to which Moses and the prophets had borne witness in their day. The essence of his rebuke of the evil and adulterous generation that demanded a sign was that they refused to learn from these same Scriptures to read the signs of the times. God to them had become a God of the dead. He was no longer a God of the living.

It is but another aspect of the same contrast between one who knows a living God and those who know him through books they have read, when Jesus draws parables from nature. As with the history of his own times, so with the working of leaven, the growth of plants, the labors of the housewife and the husbandman. There is indeed no repudiation of the catastrophic expectation of prophets of the great Day of Jehovah, messengers of warning such as John. The world-harvest is sure to come, and no time should be lost in making settlement with the Accuser. Such is the warning which Jesus reëchoes from the Baptist with added emphasis. But his own distinctive contribution, the thing in which he differs from contemporary teachers, is that he perceives the present working of a living God of mercy and love; a silent, unseen working, but irresistible. Such is the concurrent teaching of all the group of Parables of the Kingdom. Whether Jesus speaks of "the signs of the times" or the working of God in nature, or in peni-

tent human hearts melted in believing gratitude, the difference between him and the scribes in their interpretation of Scripture is that for them there is a great gulf between the God of whom they read and the God who lives and moves around them, while to Jesus there is none. He makes actuality the interpreter of the past.

With the very words of Paul before us, fighting his battle against those who sought to entangle his converts in the old yoke of bondage, it is surely unnecessary to repeat the familiar examples of Paul's teaching on the right use of Scripture. It is significant that he falls back upon Jeremiah's great prophecy of the "new covenant," a law written on the heart and sealed with a promise of fatherly love, instead of the written covenant (the Deuteronomic Code) which the people who came out of Egypt had not kept, so that Jehovah had turned from them. Jeremiah had seen the futility of mere book religion unattended by the inward relation of filial obedience and fatherly love; and Paul in his great defense of the "ministry of the new covenant," contrasting this with the ministry of Moses (II Cor. 3:1—6:10), makes this sublime protest of Jeremiah the very foundation of his own. Jeremiah had understood the difference between law and gospel. He had caught a foregleam of the glory of Christ, and Paul, set for the defense of this liberty of the children of God, the freedom of the relation of filial love, would not suffer it to be quenched by Christians who had no higher conception of the new

faith than to think of Christ as a second Moses, lawgiver on a higher scale.

The essential identity of Paul's struggle against the Judaizing reactionaries with Jesus' struggle against the scribes and Pharisees is partly appreciated to-day. At all events, it lies plainly on the surface of his epistles whenever men shall be willing to take home to themselves its modern application. We may therefore leave it to produce its own effect. Less obvious is the real affinity between Paul's appeal to the present-day living and active God, and that of Jesus. We have seen that Jesus, when challenged for a spectacular "sign," refused to base his claims on this kind of evidence, even denouncing those who required it when they should have recognized God's hand in the gracious work of healing and redemption going on among the "lost sheep" about them. Surely this is an example of that immunity to current superstition and credulity which is conferred, quite apart from scientific attainment, upon those who have the true prophet's instinct for moral and religious values. Jesus sees God working the promised redemption of his people, forgiving all their iniquities and healing all their diseases. The lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the blind see. Best of all, the poor have glad tidings (of divine forgiveness) proclaimed unto them. Outcast harlots, hearing the message, come to testify of their faith and love, bathing the feet of God's messenger with penitent tears. These things mean nothing to Simon the

Pharisee, but they mean much to Jesus. The publicans and harlots throng into the opened door, but the scribes and Pharisees hold aloof. Nay, they do not even repent themselves afterward when "the finger of God" has been working deliverance in their presence, but stubbornly demand "a sign." Jesus sees God raising to life a nation that was seemingly dead, as in Isaiah's figure of the second redemption (Is. 26:16–19). The blind Pharisee sits at the same table and says: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner."

Paul is not greater than Jesus; not even in respect to the current superstitions of the day. It is true that neither he nor his great follower at Ephesus to whom we owe the "spiritual Gospel" give any heed to the popular belief in demon-possession and exorcism. The only exorcism recognized either by Paul or "John" is the "casting out of the Prince of this world." It is possible that this curious reticence on a point made so prominent by other New Testament writers is due to the fact that Paul and "John" represent a higher stage of culture. If so, it is one of the incidental phenomena of Scripture, interesting to the historical critic, but of no special importance to the student of religion, save as it illustrates again the wide differences of cultural level on which God spake of old time unto the fathers. Jesus apparently accepted the common belief in individual demon-possession. Paul and

"John" apparently do not. In the latter case, the superiority to popular superstition characteristic of all three *may* be due in part to scientific advance. In the case of Paul and "John" it is mainly, in the case of Jesus wholly, a matter of the prophetic instinct for moral and religious values that proves "inspiration." The man who has it is "a prophet," notwithstanding Simon the Pharisee. Paul reasons on the basis of the visible agency of the living, redeeming God, just as Jesus does. But he never would have learned so to reason without Jesus. He would have been a Pharisee to the bitter end.

Here is the deeper affinity of Paul to Jesus. The Master has brought him to know the living God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul knows him by just one great, conclusive phenomenon: the present, redeeming Spirit. He who has received the adoption of the Spirit knows all. He has the witness in him. So Paul's great disciple justly phrases it. He knows that whereas he was dead now he lives, he is victorious over the world, he can bid defiance to the powers of death and hell. Jesus' "witness of the Spirit" is the same. Outward manifestations, in healings and the like, are not indifferent. Jesus values his "mighty works" as Paul also values his "signs of an Apostle." But Jesus only values them as they bear outward witness to the inward reality. Like the "tongues" which to Paul were "for a sign, not to them that believe, but for the unbelieving" (I Cor. 14:22), the "mighty works" had evidential value simply to prove to the unbe-

lieving that the overthrow of Satan's kingdom is already begun. The "strong man armed" is no longer "master of the house" (a play on the meaning of "Beelzebub"). A stronger than he is working with Jesus and taking from him his "spoils." By "the Spirit of God" the bonds of sin, disease, and death are being broken in sunder. Such is Jesus' interpretation of "the mighty works." It is distinctive of Jesus, not that he has a scientific interpretation of miracle, but that he has a religious one. That of the scribes also purports to be. In reality, it is neither scientific nor religious.

Paul's converts at Corinth value their "gifts of the Spirit" from the same outward, spectacular standpoint as the scribes who demanded a sign from Jesus. Possibly this was due to the influx of Judaizers in this church, since Paul reminds them that this is a typically Jewish tendency (I Cor. 1:22). More probably it was simply a relic of native paganism, of which neither Jews nor Gentiles are free, nor even the modern Christian world. Paul's greatness is nowhere so manifest as in the immortal chapter in which he teaches these Corinthian lovers of the marvelous that the vital, enduring, divine "gifts of the Spirit" are faith and hope and love. And love is the greatest of these, because it is of the very nature of God himself. He whose life is love has the Spirit of adoption. He is born of God. If this be the root, as it was with Jesus, of one's whole life, then "tongues" and miracles and prophecy and "knowledge" and the rest are

"signs" indeed. They bear witness even to unbelievers that this people is the "adoption" of God. If there come in one who is unlearned or unbelieving "he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed." If love be *not* the root, "tongues" are clanging brass. Prophecy, were it to the knowing of all mysteries, and miracles, were it to the uprooting of mountains, are "nothing." The "gifts of the Spirit" are faith and hope and love *together with* the outward manifestations of these.

If the manifestation be so marvelous that the world cries "miracle," well and good. That is for science to say. If science call the phenomenon by another name, well and good. We that know this agency as "a power not ourselves" know that love is of God. In this sense love is "supernatural"; and there is no other sense in which we can admit the term.

> A picket frozen on duty,
> A mother starved for her brood,
> Socrates drinking the hemlock,
> And Jesus on the rood;
> And millions that humble and nameless
> The strait, hard pathway plod,
> Some call it Consecration—
> And others call it God.

This is that "demonstration of the Spirit" which fails not as age follows age. The "tongues" may give way to other forms of utterance. The healings and helps may take place through other means, the

"prophecy" and "gnosis" nay be "done away." While faith and hope and love remain these will produce their fruits, and the fruits of the Spirit will be the witness to the world, a witness that "abides." So Paul repeats the answer of Jesus to those that demand "a sign." There is no better example of how the sense of moral and religious values can lift a man above the superstitions of his age. We rightly marvel at Paul's superiority to pagan and Jewish survivals in the Corinthian notion of "signs." But Paul did not invent the method. He learned it from Jesus.

CHAPTER V

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From the historical survey already given it must be clearly apparent that the main issue on which Christianity parted company with Judaism was the use of Scripture. Jesus came into conflict with the religion of the Synagogue because under the leadership of scribe and Pharisee it was already becoming a religion of the book such as it afterwards became. It knew a God of yesterday. He had given the commandments amid the thunders of Sinai. It knew a God of to-morrow. He was to intervene for judgment with the trump of the archangel at the last day. But the God of to-day, of nature, of history, of growing human spirit, it did not know. Jesus revealed this unknown God. He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also of all "the children of God that are scattered abroad." He was the "living" God.

Paul continued the struggle. For not even those who had companied with Jesus from the baptism of John until he was taken up could quite appreciate how far-reaching were the new principles he had taught. The yoke of bondage had to be thrown off again, and with the same distinction as before between the perishing letter and the abiding spirit.

Never had there been a man, save only Jesus, more loyal than Paul to "the law and the prophets." And never had there been one to deal so ruthlessly with the mere letter of the commandment. To Paul it was not, and never had been, "a commandment such that it could give life." If it became a *pedagogus* [1] to lead men to Christ at never so great a cost of painful discipline, then well and good. Men should be thankful for the enlightenment even of a condemning conscience. The law was of God, for through it came the knowledge of sin. But to speak of it as "life-giving" in itself, as Paul had been taught in the Synagogue, was the contrary of the truth. In itself it was "a ministration of death" (II Cor. 3:7–9).

The generation that followed Paul was largely reactionary. Even among the churches of Asia, the great mission-field of Paul, the neo-legalists became dominant. Ephesus had been Paul's headquarters, and here at the close of the first century we find a distinctly Palestinian infusion. Paul's type of gospel had given opportunity to devastating inroads on the part of Hellenizing theosophy; it was natural enough that the reaction against it should take on first of all the form of a reversion to the Jewish-Christian type of neo-legalism. The gospel is conceived as Law and Promise. In spite of their Pauline foundation the Churches of Asia are using,

[1] The word does not mean "teacher." The *pædagogus* was what the etymology implies, a servant who took charge of the schoolboy as mentor and disciplinarian *in loco parentis*.

early in the second century, when we are first able to trace their type of doctrine, the Palestinian, neo-legalistic Gospel of Matthew as their standard, and contending earnestly for this as the apostolic digest (*σύνταξις*) of the "precepts of the Lord," side by side with the Revelation of John concerning the promised New Jerusalem, against the heretics who were "perverting the precepts of the Lord to their own lusts" and "denying the (physical) resurrection and the judgment." Polycarp (112–115) and Papias (140–150) are the great champions of this return to the "tradition handed down from the beginning."

Yet this Palestinian molding of the Pauline type of gospel is by no means without a protest. Even apocalypse, which the practice of the time describes as "prophecy," closely as it conforms to the literary forms of this distinctly Jewish development, takes on in Christian hands a marked difference in one significant characteristic. Archdeacon Charles, our greatest authority in this field, makes the striking remark in his recent Schweich Lectures:

> The *differentia* between Jewish and Christian apocalypses is just this, that whereas in the former the Law takes the chief place, in the latter it takes quite a secondary position or (as in Revelation) is not mentioned at all.[1]

But a far greater protest meets us in the field of gospel tradition, the representation of the life and

[1] *The Apocalypse,* R. H. Charles, 1919, p. 68, note 2.

teaching of Jesus. Here in the person of the fourth evangelist Paul found a great "vindicator" at Ephesus some forty years after his death, who was able to lift again the conception of the gospel above the level of mere improved Law and Promise to which Jewish-Christian reaction had reduced it. But this teacher, too, found "many adversaries," both within and without the Church. For half a century his "spiritual Gospel" remained neglected, almost unknown. Then at last, because men had come to ascribe it to the Apostle John, the Pauline Gospel of the "Christ not after the flesh but after the spirit" came to its own. Here at last is spiritual insight. The fourth evangelist does not lack penetration to appreciate wherein the issue really lay between the book-religion of Judaism and the spirituality of Jesus and Paul.

There are many things which we do not have a right to expect of this "John," great spiritual leader as he is. One such thing which we have no right to expect is that he will entirely eschew the allegorizing, non-historical use of Scripture common to his time, and especially dear to that Alexandrian type of religious teaching to which he shows himself largely indebted. We must expect to find even the fourth evangelist discovering wonderful "types" in such coincidences as the name of a pool in Jerusalem "which is by interpretation Sent," the fact that Jesus' garments were so divided by the executioners as to fulfill to the letter the description of the victim in Psalm 22:18: "They parted my garments among

them, and on my vesture they did cast lots," that he used the words "I thirst" from the same Psalm, or that there were just 153 fishes in the marvelous haul of John 21:11, which, as Jerome tells us, would include "every sort" if one fish was of every species then recognized. This is very like the Alexandrian allegorizing interpretation of Pseudo-Barnabas, and there is enough more of the same sort even in the work of the sublimest of the evangelists to teach us not to expect miraculous exemption from the foibles of his school.

But there is something more. The fourth evangelist lays hold of the Synoptic sections on the conflict of Jesus with the scribes and Pharisees who seek to impose on him the authority of Moses (Mk. 2:1—3:6) and the charge of collusion with Beelzebub (Mt. 12:22–32). Of the latter parallel we have already spoken.[1] The former is drawn out by "John" into the form of a dialogue of Jesus with the scribes in Jerusalem who plot against his life because he has "made a man whole on the Sabbath day" (Jn. 5:1–47, continued in 7:15–24). It is in this dialogue, contrasting the authority of the Son of Man with the authority of Moses, that the fourth evangelist sets forth his conception of the difference between Christ's use of Scripture and that of "the Jews." One who carefully examines it will see that the author of the dialogue is not merely developing the scenes of Mark 2:1—3:6 to show Jesus' rightful claim as Son of Man to forgive sins and to heal, as

[1] Above, p. 81.

well as to be Lord of the Sabbath, but that he is also using the distinction of Paul regarding the Scriptures, which as the scribes use them are far from conferring eternal life, but used as they should be lead men to Him who is the lord and giver of life indeed. The subject of the discourse is the authority of Moses vs. the Authority of the Son of Man.

In the latter part (Jn. 5:31–47) the debate turns upon the "witness" borne to the Son of Man. This is a threefold, divine witness. First, that of John, the lamp that burned and shined for a time (verses 33–35); then, the works of healing, to which in Synoptic tradition Jesus had made his appeal (verse 36; cf. Mk. 2:1–12); finally the Father's own witness in the very Scriptures for whose sake the conspirators are seeking to kill him (verses 37–47; cf. Mk. 3:1–6).

Were it only that in this section Jesus claims the witness of Moses "who wrote of me," and that here and elsewhere in the same Gospel he declares that the Scriptures "bear witness of me," we might take the sense to be no more than the ordinary type of "Scripture fulfillments" by coincidence of prophetic foresight with the fact. We have indeed enough, and more than enough, of this sort of juggling with words in the writings of the time; and, as we have seen, the fourth evangelist has his full share of it. To him the utterance of Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin by which he secures the condemnation of Jesus is a more than human utterance. When Caiaphas

urged, "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not," he said this "not of himself: but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation." One cannot deny affinity here with Philo's idea of involuntary prophecy. We have noted the same idea in I Pt. 1:11f. Again when he says that Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day and was glad at beholding it (8:56) the conception does not rise far above the level of contemporary interpretations of Genesis 17:1–17, where the "laughter" of Abraham at the promise that kings should come of him is made out to be a laughter of rejoicing at the vision of the Messiah. Moreover, "John" certainly goes as far as any of our evangelists in making Isaiah's complaint that he is sent to a people deaf to the message (Is. 6:10) an efficient cause [1] of Jewish resistance to the message of Jesus (Jn. 12:37–40), and he further adds: "These things said Isaiah because he saw his glory and he spake of him." We have here "Scripture fulfillment" as current interpretation understands it, whether in Synagogue or Church. It does not help the case to deny the fact.

But there is also something more and deeper. The fourth evangelist does not think of Jesus merely as a man among men. He is, before all else, the eternal Word of God incarnate. The creative, re-

[1] For a typical instance of current belief regarding the word of prophecy as an *efficient* cause see Rom. 9:8 f. The belief is very ancient; cf. Gen. 27:35 f.

vealing, and redemptive Wisdom of God "tabernacled" in him so that men might see His glory, as Isaiah in vision had seen the cloud and fire of the "glory" going up a second time in the midst of a redeemed Israel (Is. 58:8, 10 f.; 60:1–20). This Word was the life, and the life was the light of men in all the ages (Jn. 1:4, 14, 16). What our evangelist means by this Word of life he sets forth explicitly in his Epistle (I Jn. 1:1 f.). It is "the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." Therefore, when in the dialogue with the scribes he makes Jesus claim the witness of Moses and the prophets, we do him injustice if we think *only* of the false exegesis of the time with its bewildering distortions of the historic sense. Deep underneath these word-plays of Alexandrian typology glows the evangelist's consciousness of the prophetic mind. He seems to realize that Isaiah has not mere miraculous foresight, but insight into the movement of the Spirit of God. Abraham and Isaiah both had seen that *Shekinah,* that "indwelling" of God with his people. It is as this revealing, redemptive Word of God that "John" makes Jesus oppose the unbelieving scribes with the "witness" of Moses and the prophets. The culmination of the opposition is this (v. 39 f.):

> Ye search the Scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.

The author of this deepest, maturest interpretation of the gospel story is he who contributes most among New Testament writers toward a truly Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture. Neither he nor his great predecessor at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul, has scientific emancipation from current misconceptions as to the sacred writings. Both use an Alexandrian, allegorizing method of interpretation, as do their contemporaries. And yet "John" is not unaware of a profound difference between Jesus' use of the Scriptures and that of the scribes. And he does not stop with this recognition of difference on the part of the Christian from the Jewish interpreter, but in his accustomed deeper reflection brings it into line with his whole conception of "the Word of life." To him, the revealing, redemptive Spirit of God, which alone brings spiritual life and light to all mankind, is of the very substance of God himself, coeternal with the Creator. It is to the inspiration of this omnipresent, eternal, releaving, and redemptive Spirit of God that all the light is due, which, shining through the world's darkness, has given to men among all races and in all ages "the right to be called the children of God." This eternal Spirit of light and love and truth is the source of all true revelation and inspiration. Both in the old time and the new this "Wisdom" of God was the revealer of the Father and the redeemer of straying souls of men. The law which was "given by Moses" owes all that it reveals of light and truth to him. And in the earthly life of Jesus this Word

is seen incarnate. Grace and truth became the possession of all those who were the partners of this life.

Here, then, is the difference. The scribes have set themselves to the study of the Law. By obedience to the precepts of Moses they count themselves sure of a share in the world to come. This is their pride and joy. So Paul depicts the typical Pharisee (Rom. 2:17–20). Israel is thus made a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness. Resting upon the Law, and discriminating the things acceptable through the instruction gained from it, he who bears the name of a Jew can thus "glory in God and in the knowledge of his will." "John" reproduces precisely this thought of Paul when he makes Jesus say to the scribes who were conspiring to kill him, "Ye search the Scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life." Whether in Jewish scribes and Pharisees, or in Jewish converts opposing Paul, or in moderns clinging to the letter, while blind to the spirit of an inspired past, this is true bibliolatry, the religion of the book.

Over against this, "John" has placed the figure of the prophet who came "not to destroy but to fulfill." As truly as "Matthew," he appreciates that Jesus was no iconoclast but the sort of radical who is the truest conservative, because intent on penetrating to that which is vital and enduring in the heritage of the past. To "Matthew," Jesus is the second Moses, the giver of a higher law, a "righteousness" which by going to the very springs of action

exceeds that of "the scribes and Pharisees." To "John," he is the incarnate "Wisdom of God," giver of "grace and truth." He offers not law but life, a spirit infused from above. To "come to him" is to enter into contact with this life of God, incarnate through the ages in men who by it were made to be "prophets and friends of God." For, while to them it was given by divers portions and in divers manners, to him it was not given by measure, but in its fullness; he the source and fountain head, we all receiving from his fullness, one grace upon another.

He that has the law of Moses holds in his hand the chief guide-book to life. So it speaks of itself (Dt. 30:15 f.), so the rabbis delighted to call it, so it actually is, if rightly used. But, if wrongly, then Moses himself will be the chief accuser of those who set their hope on him. For Moses and the prophets wrote of the eternal Word. His writings bear witness of that eternal, redemptive "Wisdom" of God whose work is perennial through the ages, but reaches its acme in Jesus Christ. Thus "John" echoes the warning of Paul (II Cor. 3:5—4:6; cf. Jn. 5:45–47). The wrong use is to make the Scriptures a book of commandments for obedience to which God rewards with "a share in the world to come." The right use is to make them witnesses to "the life, even the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested," so that a man should come into contact with it and share it. He that hath the Scriptures in his hands and uses them thus has a guide-book to the eternal life. They

will become his *pedagogus,* leading him to the Son. He that hath the Son hath the life itself, and needeth no other than this witness of God. "For the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son hath not the life" (I Jn. 5:10–12).

Paul's great successor at Ephesus goes to the very heart of things in thus carrying back the Pauline conception of the gospel as a gift of new life, to apply it to the case of the scribes who appealed against Jesus to the authority of Moses. If the gospel be only a new and better law, the gift of a second Moses whose commandments, when observed, obtain the reward of life hereafter, then there is no higher expression of it than the Sermon on the Mount, whose doctrine is: "Be ye imitators of God and walk in love as beloved children of the Highest." Matthew so conceives it, aiming to teach all men everywhere to observe "all things whatsoever Jesus commanded" (Mt. 28:20). His account of Jesus' reply to the question how eternal life may be obtained adds the new commandment of love to the Mosaic decalogue, and promises admission to life as the reward of obedience (Mt. 19:16–19). This is far better than the old legalism of the Synagogue. As much better as taking the loving, forgiving nature of God for our standard is better than enslavement to written precepts of ancient time. But it is not "gospel" as Paul understands the term. Gospel, as Paul and "John" understand it, is not mere

imitation of the divine nature but participation in it. The Christian Apostle and the evangelist proclaim not a mere improved process for obtaining life, but the impartation of life through that Spirit of adoption which makes us know that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. The one is morality, the other is religion. We learn morality from Moses and the prophets, and a still higher and better morality from the Sermon on the Mount. But we obtain the power to do what the most ideal law could not make us do because of the weakness of our flesh. We obtain new power through contact with the living Word who spake by the prophets and was incarnate in Jesus. No doctrine of sacred Scripture deserves to be called Christian which does not go beyond the neo-legalism of "Matthew" and include also the evangelic principle, the glad tidings of Paul and "John" concerning the gift of life.

The Church has not yet fully formulated its Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture because the issue has not as yet been squarely joined. Great principles of the faith lie latent until their time is fully come. But there are indications that in our day that time has come. The methods and principles of grammatico-historical interpretation were imposed upon the Church by sheer necessity. Without these Scripture was rapidly becoming the mere tool of boundless subjectivity. Every man made it the servant of his own delusions. The next step, logically inevitable, was criticism, both textual and higher. When manuscripts disagreed, was the in-

dividual reader to make choice according to his own predilections? Or should there be developed an impartial science to determine by approved methods of universal application which of two or more variant readings had the better claim to represent the lost original? Such is the patient, laborious, devoted, self-denying science of textual criticism. It has reached a degree of perfection in methods and results for the field of the New Testament incomparably beyond all other fields, simply because men could be found willing to devote their lives to the determination of this text in its purity in the proportion of a hundred to one as compared to any other ancient text.

In origin and methods the science of the higher criticism is closely akin to the lower. The Bible has two accounts of the creation of man, two accounts of the sacred history of Israel, four accounts of the gospel story. Which shall we call authoritative? It has reflections of the religious life and the redemptive ideal in three languages, from various environments, over a period of more than a thousand years of religious and moral development. As between pre-exilic and post-exilic accounts of the history of Israel, which is to be chosen? As between prophetic and priestly conceptions of religious ideals and obligations, as between ancient and modern, as between Hebrew and Hellenistic, which? As between the Palestinian tradition of Jesus' life and teaching and the Pauline (most ripely enunciated in the fourth Gospel), which? We have the es-

chatology of the apocalyptic chapters of the Synoptic Gospels coupled with their fuller elaboration in the Revelation of John. We have also the eschatology of Paul and the fourth evangelist, whose conception of the future has completely dropped connection with Jewish expectations of a glorified Jerusalem dominant over the nations, and thinks only of a manifestation "not unto the world," an eternal life in the fellowship of Christ and the Father. As between these two, which? Are all these ideas and teachings identical, or should we discriminate? And if we discriminate, as did the prophets and Jesus and Paul, should it be at random, and according to individual predilection? Or shall we take these great teachers at their word, act upon their example, make Scripture no longer a matter of "private interpretation," but a record of the movement of the divine Spirit of revelation and redemption, down across the ages, out from center to circumference? For one who reverences the Bible as the work not of men but of the Spirit of God, a reflection of that growing light which has ever been the life of men, there is no alternative but to use the best methods of historical research, those which the world of scholarship approves as of universal application, to study the history of redemptive ideas in interaction with the changing environment. The discipline has taken the name of the higher criticism, a scientific method for the fuller appreciation of the movement of religious and moral development in its central line of progress,

as manifested in the canonical writings. If one choose to employ theological terms, it is the study of the work of the revealing and redemptive Spirit of God.

It was not to be expected that historico-critical methods of Bible study, were they never so inevitable, could go on for two centuries without provoking reaction in the Church. The idea of an infallible, miraculous, verbally inspired standard of faith and practice is too ancient, too useful to those that "sit in Moses' seat," too labor-saving to those for whom questions of reason and conscience involve labor of the most painful and distasteful kind, to tolerate an advance along such lines. Moreover, science is a mere instrument applicable to purposes of good or evil according to the disposition of those who apply it. Chemistry may multiply the yield of our fields and reënforce our industry, or it may sweep the teeming, populous earth with the besom of devastation, according as its forces are turned. Likewise, it is possible to turn the forces of historical criticism against an outworn theory of sacred Scripture, and, by riddling its obsolete defenses, alienate from the real sources of religious life an easily persuaded multitude. It is possible thus cheaply to purchase a reputation for keenness and erudition. Criticism has been so used, as quacks lay hold of the discoveries of medical science. But the remedy for quackery is not the abolition of medicine. The remedy for destructive criticism is criticism that is constructive. Nor is the discrimination of

the false prophet from the true teacher of the eternal Word a novel requirement. Scripture itself imposes the duty on the reason and conscience of the individual, and trusts its case to the unsophisticated, the "children of Wisdom," after any impartial hearing.

Conflict of views there must needs be. Followers of Jesus and of Paul are expected to be, as to malice, babes indeed, but, as to the understanding, full-grown men; and humanity knows no other school for such than the conflict of opinion. Three centuries ago the post-Reformation dogmatists attempted to set up an infallible rule of faith and practice offsetting that of the papacy. For this purpose they reverted to the theory of the Synagogue of an infallible Torah, whereof the very vowel-points were dictated from heaven. Since then, the increasing pressure of an inward inconsistency has been felt throughout every part of the Christian Church where private judgment had not been stifled by authority. Pre-Christian conceptions of revelation and inspiration were found too narrow. A Christian sense of what the Scriptures convey demands a larger, more Christian definition. Critical studies have forced this issue to the front. Others which agitated once the multitude of sects born of the attempt to secure uniformity by appeal to a written standard which itself was not uniform have sunk into relative insignificance. To-day the question of the use of Scripture is supreme, and the fact is beginning to be recognized. It *is* a "funda-

mental," whether we look upon divine revelation as static or dynamic. It *is* a question of a living or a dying Church whether it shall lay hold upon letter or spirit, whether it shall bind itself to the dead past or to the living present and the expanding future. It *is* "fundamental" whether we have a Christian or an un-Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture.

And to have a Christian doctrine, it is not enough to endorse the tools of scientific enquiry, repressing and rebuking frivolous, self-seeking, or irreverent application. The methods of criticism were developed by reverent, devoted, self-denying servants of Christ, and bear the marks of suffering for his sake. It is through the fire of misrepresentation and opposition, through the chill of laborious days and sleepless nights, that they have been tempered to a keenness that makes them the model for the whole world of scholarship. It ill comports with their history that they should be made the weapons of cheap iconoclasm. Such, however, they are liable to become, unless the men who wield them are animated by the Spirit to which they owe their origin. To be Christian in the true sense of the word, our doctrine of sacred Scripture must embody that principle which determines the use made of it by Jesus and Paul, and distinguishes it from pagan and Jewish. We have found it set forth most clearly by the ripest, profoundest thought of the apostolic age, the "theologian" evangelist. Scripture, according to the fourth evangelist, is the record of the "witness" of God. It brings men into vital contact

with the life, "even that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested" in the person and work and work of Christ. This contact with quickening, divine life is achieved, however, not as the scribes imagine, by defining rules obedience to which obtains reward from the Lawgiver, but by a kindling of the fire of devotion through the eternal flame of self-surrender to the cause of God. For this devotion to the redemptive purpose of God is a river of fire coming down through the ages, out of which, to borrow the symbolism of Hebrew myth,[1] living spirits rise up to sanctify the Name, and when their work is done sink back again. Such are God's ministers that are made "a flame of fire." Contact with the spirit of Jesus gives life eternal, because it stands for the whole fullness of this revealing and redemptive Spirit of the Father. In Moses and all the prophets, still more in the records of Jesus' life and work, men can come into contact with this eternal life of God and be enkindled by it.

The dialogue in which our fourth evangelist embodies his contrast between Jesus' use of the Scripture and that of the scribes gives not a rule, but a principle. It describes not a method, but a spirit. It is not scientific, but religious. Science, method, rule, must be developed in practical application. The Christian principle opens the way for such sciences as comparative religion, the history of religions, the psychology of religious experience. But in itself it is something else, at once less and greater.

[1] Based upon Dt. 33:2. See marginal rendering.

It is faith in God, faith in man also as (potentially at least) the son of God, and faith in the eternal revealing and redemptive Spirit of Truth, who spake by the prophets, and was incarnate in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The New Testament supplies not the finished product but the ferment out of which must come the next great secular development of religion, the advance from letter to spirit, from the use of the records and documents of religious experience in the past as if conformity to their standards guaranteed eternal life, to a use of them as means of contact with the life of God in man. One great stage of this advance was made possible by the work of Paul; another by Paul's unknown successor at Ephesus. But He to whom all future ages must look as the great Pioneer and Captain in this liberation and enlargement of our spiritual life is One of whom it was remembered that his teaching, while based on the same Scriptures used by the Scribes, was of another tone and character. Of Him his disciples could say, as they recalled the lessons He had drawn from Law and Prophets and Psalms: "Did not our hearts burn within us while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

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